# THE MODERN ADVENTURE

W. J. BRYTON

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BY

W. J. BLYTON

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# A WORD FIRST

THIS is a direct facing of the modern man, by one of his own sort, on the major issues of life and the realities that underlie all life, in as light a way as the subject allows. There must by now be a vast number who are ready for something that at least gets away from the chronic mood of cock-shying and tries to give out a light of its own, if only a few candle-power. When serious minds have a sharp attack of doubt they do not want either drawing-room entertainers or the familiar *clichés* of revolt : they want constructiveness. Real doubt can be a crippling thing, being a drag on effort and a shortening of the view ; while on vital matters the celebrated open mind can be about as desirable as an open head or an open wound.

All this the writer of these pages knows from years of rough experience, and declines to treat the reader to literary high-kicks or the latest fashions in perplexing eager minds. He has got it into his head that the human intelligence has

a sort of natural eternal right to some solid moral and rational foothold in this universe, amid its daily phenomena of change, loss, brevity, evil, pain, and death. Humour and jest, too, it has a right to—but not as an answer to the primal questions, as some employ them. Shrugs and scolding are not solutions ; a joke is imbecile in certain junctures.

Consciousness, life, and the Whole—these mean something : the reason is *one* instrument to find that meaning, with assistance on the way. Here, anyhow, is a mind of 1930 tackling things in the idiom of 1930 for the sort of readers who take their *Nation*, *New Statesman*, *John o' London's*, and *Everyman :* who read the popular science series and the symposia on religion ; who have dipped into their Nietzsche, Darwin, J. B. Bury, J. M. Robertson, and Haeckel, and have an inkling of what Einstein means, and Whitehead, Jung, Adler, Freud, Shaw, and Wells : who know that this age of transition is—in transit, and expect some day to come to rather more satisfactory terms with life and the universe.

It is not addressed to specialists in science, theology, or philosophy ; though it raids their results and puts them to a part of the public that wants them. It is unlike some current books in that it does not aim at making enemies,

but friends; not at bemusing people, but helping them.

The Modern Adventure here dealt with is not political or geographical; still less is it the 'adventure' of one sort of novel. It is the religious quest at the core of life, so much more crucial, exciting, and, to many, more tantalising. Give a man his moorings on spiritual facts and he will soon think straight on issues like world-peace, social and international solidarity, economic justice, family loyalties, and the primal decencies. He will use the ground won—not to go to sleep on, but to think and act from.

The order in this book is not a rigorously formal one. Challenges are met just in the order they were raised by young men of the present, who will be the rulers, writers, voters, and speakers of the Future that will soon be on us

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# THE MODERN ADVENTURE

## I

### THE ADVENTURER

WE will take a concrete character, a type of Everyman, living in the very heart of to-day's controversy, blown by its cross-winds, but demanding a few facts and principles to live by.

That will be more useful than abstract discussion. It will embody the modern problem better. You may know this 'John Smith' personally, his post-War history, the things he reads, and the discussions that have given him his mental accent.

He was in the War; sometimes (he says, with a shrug) he seems to have been in it ever since the Armistice! The thirteen years since have been spent in an air of public questioning and criticism, varied by hard work, meeting his bills, and trying in his spare time to read and think himself into clarity. But among the

bookmen the confusion of voices and mind is baffling. His quest has been interrupted by post-War domestic reconstructions. Several of the many 'new' philosophies have been espoused, and more or less let him down, as they have a way of doing.

Such a typical modern—mentally wideawake—in the last fifteen years will have often touched spiritual rock-bottom. There is nothing which he has not at some time doubted, except his own existence and a prejudice in favour of 'carrying on.' He has often been driven back on iron rations. His assets have been the desire to know more, and the idea that solutions are to be found somehow, some time. Just so, in Flanders, he stood on sentry-go, not knowing what use it was, and not a bit exhilarated or wildly hopeful. Many of his contemporaries know that they have a soul chiefly by the iron that has entered it. He went on thinking even if the thinking was at first in a circle, because he could not agree, in his heart, that life was a minx, though it might be a sphinx.

He had had enough of paradoxes, except as a parlour game; enough of cynicism and moods; more than enough of negative criticisms, destruction, and 'interim' makeshift answers. After joining in the impatient critics of some dogmatists, he lost patience with *them*

too ! And he rounded on malcontents with the invitation : ' Give me something better, or as good ! '

There is certainly an excess of fastidious criticism and distaste in the air. A pity : because the ages which have been greatest in culture (the Periclean, the golden Middle Age, the fifteenth century in Italy, the Elizabethan) have been periods of exuberance and creation. Why are the ' highly cultured ' nowadays so frequently the impotent, bored, and creed-less ? Will men remember us as such in fifty years, when they weigh us up as we do the more creative Victorians ? So many are hard to please or suit. The available religion, art, enterprise, society, nature, love—they don't appear to like any of them. There is a cant of disillusion ; but there is also the real thing, and whether it is physiological, nervous, or spiritual in origin, who can say ?

One agrees largely with that sincere if exasperated writer Richard Aldington that ' so far as England is concerned, the dominant ideas, the general conceptions of life, have only been badly shaken, not destroyed. Has the " twentieth century " yet begun in England ? At most it is a shell-shocked boy struggling against the tyranny of an aged, tenacious, and detested parent.' Exactly. That is how the boy *would*

see the situation through his moods and nervous paroxysms. But an impartial looker-on would see at once that the invalid hadn't all the points on his side; the elder has a case and a duty to stick to it—for the lad's sake no less than for everybody else's. Quite soon the youth will lose his raw edges, and—if he doesn't forget—he will live to thank those who kept certain facts and standards intact; much as a roving, adventurous cadet of a house, coming back blistered and sun-bitten from foreign parts, would thank his trustee or banker for not letting him 'blue' his patrimony despite his pungent letters of demand home. That happens in every generation. But in this it is most conspicuous of all.

Still, instinctively youth insists on asking its own questions in its own way. And that is natural and right. Some of the questions its older brothers can answer—and gradually the younger take the answer. Other replies youth can't hear—owing to the racket around and the buzzing in its own ears. And then there are a few queries which only youth's next twenty years will ever answer: for some mental worries the only cure is, as the saying has it, Anno Domini.

Let us have a fresh, at least a personal treatment, if possible. It will be imperfect and

incomplete, that goes without saying. A few may like it better for that, and may even forgive an occasional sarcasm or flash of feeling for the sincerity somewhere behind.

The religious situation is rather like the political, in many lands. There is so much unrest about that numbers of people are inclined—in a careless, easy-going sort of way—to sympathise with what they believe to be attempts to 'ginger' or dynamite things up, to 'experiment with new ideas.' Not that they take it on themselves to study or sift—they merely hope (as in the case of the Russian Dictatorship, for example) *something* may come out of it. Those who hate restraints (because a minority are likely to collide with those restraints) are not unwilling that huge experiments, whose risks and consequences cannot be gauged, should go on—preferably some distance away. Discontent of various sorts is inclined to grasp at hopes from upheaval. 'Even if it fails—well, it will stir them up.' Who does not know this mood? It is perhaps the most widespread mood of the age. It is an impulsive reaction, and has little or nothing to do with reasoning or any scientific attitude. But it ought to be reckoned with.

To return to the individual case whose story will be told here: how did he pick his steps?

Starting from the rudimentary facts of sense and consciousness, warily—one by one—he established his beliefs. He would not force the pace. He would not beg any questions *en route*. He did not violently wish to believe this, that, or the other; if belief came, good. But it would have to come by natural stages and rational means.

But I will not deceive you. In one point he was not typical of the bright young people. He was not quite a slave to his period. From early years he had read a lot in poetry, philosophy, science, history, and theology, and was vaccinated against some of the crazes of the nineteen-twenties and the denials of 1930.

Persistent in the search for facts, he was straight with himself and with those facts. The fight went on for years, and it has led to a few great certainties which have taken away the worst stings from life—and death; which have put his thinking on to firm bases; and have increased vastly his chances of understanding and enjoying life. He cannot pose as a 'simple man-in-the-street,' because he has read and studied and collected results. He cannot appear as a clairvoyant or an emotionalist, because he distrusts *not* feeling, but feeling apart from intellect, logic, and fact. He was not perishing for 'rest,' the feeling of certainty, shelter, or

any other kind of anodyne whatever. He did not want to be like anyone—nor, worse still, unlike anyone. Simply he wanted the truth, or as much of it as is accessible to human faculty: and the fairness of the method of reaching it was always as important to him as the result aimed at. Because any persuasion arrived at by bamboozling oneself, or even by untidy 'rush' tactics, has something immoral and insecure about it. A man's conscience should be worried more by dishonest ways of acquiring belief than by the honest absence of belief.

He plunged into 1930 life at the six-foot end: attended dismal rackety parties of the B.Y.P.; has been drawn by the fine vague hopefulness of Wells; smiled at and been irritated by the rockets of G.B.S.; exhilarated by G.K.C. and has met and talked with numbers of the younger writers. In the way of journalistic duty, he once attended spiritualist séances, in search of experience, clues, and copy. He went in and out among the different 'publics,' loosely called 'the Public'; on Tuesday dining with M.P. friends at the House, on the Terrace over cigars learning the ways of the legislative mind. This he supplemented on Wednesday by meeting civil servants in Whitehall; the next day he was strenuously Bohemian in some art circle or

other ; and the next, at some of the theatres or cinemas. The Abbey, S. Paul's, and Westminster Cathedral knew him ; so as to see things in the round, he never quite lost touch with religious ideas and their organised expression in the world of real men. And all the time, being English of the English, he shied at owning to an interest in ideas, extra-terrestrial curiosities, or religion : sharing the curious national elusiveness in these matters.

But keen minds react against their period ; they do not float with it. They lose patience with the repeated statement that this, that, or the other view ' isn't tenable nowadays.' ' *Then what is ?* ' he would ask. It was a retriever instinct on the scent. And another irritation was to hear the prematurely weaned ridiculing a number of great brains because they happened to be contemporary with Queen Victoria. A few of these bright-brows who had fled from normality were like some Greek of the decadence (as Buchan said lately) ' who broke the nose of an Apollo of Pheidias in order to make the Goths laugh.' All that is well enough as a phase, lasting several years : but it is meant to be outgrown. If not, one is a nuisance to oneself and others.

The man in his twenties or thirties to-day, who means to *get somewhere* mentally, and live

by an ideal, has a harder row to hoe than in any other time. Look at the odds. Certainly there are some fine minds at work in the sciences, arts, and religion; but also what a proportion there is of books and papers that cannot say yes to life, or are a sonata on the sensual string, or a tune on the eternal 'triangle.' Then we have our neo-pagans and 'life-worshippers'—known at once by their sadness. ('I'm quite a-moral, you know!') This life-worship turns out to be deadly night-shade. There are others who denigrate historical figures, calling it irony.

And there is the great fashion for Labels. As Chesterton protests, people nowadays take or reject things in a lump. The modern girl, for instance, is supposed to like a list of disconnected things—bobbed hair, cocktails, 'Ulysses,' and the works of T. S. Eliot. 'But if a man, daring to exercise his private and personal judgement as well as he could, should come to the conclusion that (1) bobbed hair is nice, (2) cocktails nasty, (3) T. S. Eliot admirable, and (4) "Ulysses" a dingy experiment in argot like an artificial poem in thieves' slang, most of the moderns would not know what to do with him or where to place him.' Certain things are supposed to go together: If you are a vegetarian, *ipso facto* you are expected to be a votary

of some fancy religion, you are 'against dogmas,' you appoint yourself protector of dogs and cats, you are keen on Tagore and perhaps Richard Jefferies. *Why?* If you like a chop and 'half a bitter,' you are thereby put in the sect which can never see the hard sense (no less than nonsense) in Bernard Shaw, and his appreciation of the superior pleasure of fitness to sensuality. *Why?* If you are a business 'go-getter,' it will help if you are known as therefore a despiser of fine culture, and regard poets as 'Cissies.' *Why?*

My friend Ifor Evans notes, more seriously, that a sort of sullen disillusion and confusion has got into the very crannies of many minds; and they refuse to relate themselves in any way to the problems of this age or the contemporary struggle for beliefs. 'Will the historian of the future,' he goes on, 'some young man who is now struggling with the requirements of matriculation, be forced to write in 1950 some such summary of our age as the following: "By 1930, the imaginative record of the War was complete, but nothing followed except more records by imaginative writers. It was a time of promise, but the promise was not fulfilled. They knew that their age needed reform; its political labels were outworn and its moral and spiritual values needed overhauling. They

rejected endeavour in all these directions. They were a bruised generation. In part it was their respect for truth and their fear of shabbiness that might lie behind idealism. They were so afraid of sentimentality, that they dreaded to be associated with anything that might be called a 'good cause.' Believing the new world to be unattainable, they sank back distrustfully into the old. They added nothing and it has been left for us. . . .'"

'The post-War philosophy is surely a little out of date now,' observes the *Manchester Guardian*, reviewing a smart novelist, 'which suggests that the only meaning to be discovered in life is that it has no meaning. Intellectual disillusionment of this kind reveals the discipline neither of fact nor of a coherent idea.'

All the clever things have been said over and over; they are *vieux jeu* enough now, and some of us want to stop our world whizzing like a zoetrope for a steady look at things.

What are the chances? The next chapter may help to show.

## II

### THE SCENE

IN that sombre study, *Die Buddenbrocks*, Thomas Mann the German realist shows his Lubeck senator breaking up in health and finance, hearing death at the door, and in his panic and emptiness plucking books out of his library to solace himself with some proofs of the survival of the soul, the existence and pardon of God. Too late! He muddled into the night unprepared.

Better of course a late interest in the issue than never at all. But there is something unhandsome in the deliberate postponement; something nobler in the ancient counsel to remember the Creator in the days of youth. The best and finest of the faculties are desirable for that quest; the scents and trails are thickest in the morning.

Yet, as J. C. Hardwick says, 'the fact is that the religious standpoint is not reached by an individual *until he sees that life as it is usually lived cannot be taken seriously*, and that it actually

is, as Ecclesiastes said it was, "vanity," i.e. something vapid and meaningless.' That implies a certain intellectuality and insight, a stage which an increasing number of people to-day never reach. They are dulled by 'pleasures,' excitement, and distractions; or are cheated into blindness by a good digestion—or rendered indifferent by a bad one.

We have excuses. But the faltering of social courage (in family, state and even in trade) that marks our generation will disappear only with the cause to which it can largely be traced—a weakened hold on final truths. The world has sustained shocks which react severely on individual conduct and codes. Its massed economics have been subject to tidal strains not yet fully understood, prompting people to temporising and timorous tactics. Whole classes too are only just graduating in self-consciousness and reflection—while a popular permit vaguely covers hasty contradictory 'messages' from publicists using strangely opposite moral currencies. These are some of the deterrents from investment in spiritual enterprise; just as in times of disturbance and insecurity money is tight for trade enterprise.

H. G. Wells says this is an age of comparative abundance, civility, and kindness, 'but it is also a period of monstrous dangers. And in this

phase of leisure and cheapness there are also restlessness, dark apprehensions, and discontent such as we find unparalleled in any previous age of good or bad fortune. We know that life is short and we must all die, and the greater multitude of us is driven by that thought to an incessant pursuit of small distractions. . . . The individual is confronted, but not plainly and frankly, with a need for remaking himself, and this task appears more monstrous than it really is. So he wavers continually in his conduct and judgements. He complains of a disorder and futility in life that is indeed only in himself.' He adds that the ' daily lives of the great majority are frankly irreligious ; they seem to differ only in their scope, variety, and intelligence from the lives of animals.' Which recalls A. G. Gardiner's verdict that ' religion enters as little into the lives of the majority as into the lives of ants.'

Still, there is an intense half-smothered *interest* in these all-embracing questions, and, Wells adds, ' most lives are shaped partly by current moral and religious forms and maxims. Religion in its completeness has always been the minority's ; still it has been necessary for collective life, and without it morality was baseless and law unjustifiable. The intermittent disposition of most human beings toward some

sort of righteousness beyond self-seeking has been upheld, as some sprawling, weak-jointed climbing plant may be upheld in a trellis, by that steadfast minority of sincere and devoted persons,' whom he calls 'the salt of the earth.'

There is a whole class of states of mind which may be brought together under the head of 'every-dayism.' 'The dinner bell and the playing fields, the cinema and the newspaper, the week-end visit and the factory siren, a host of such expectant things calls to a vast majority of people in our modern world to *stop thinking* and get busy with the interest in hand, and so on to the next without a thought for the general frame and drama in which these momentary and personal incidents are set. . . . For many people the religious life now, as in the past, has been a quite desperate effort to withdraw sufficient attention and energy from the flood of events to get some sort of grasp and keep whatever grip is won, upon the relations of the self to the whole. Far more recoil in terror from such a possibility, and would struggle strenuously against solitude in the desert, solitude under the stars, solitude in a silent room, or indeed any occasion for comprehensive thought.'

Modern England and America, says Santa-

yana, have ' cared too much and too intensely.' All but a very few have lost the secret of connected living and reflection, of calm and renunciation, and what he calls ' the secret of the Cross.' It shows in strain, drabness of the soul, and in other ways. ' It is easy to get into colleges,' says Professor Radhakrishnan : ' harder than ever to be educated. . . . Unless the " mind " is taken in its deeper sense so as to include aesthetic development and ethical perfection—unless mind is interpreted as one with spirit—we have not reached the ideal of civilization. The sort of mental life which prevails is at a low level. . . . Mechanical plots, detective stories, crossword puzzles allure and amuse us. The individual belonging to a community on this level does not think for himself, but acts in a conventional unintelligent way. His moral nature is crude and undeveloped, being a mass of likes and dislikes, prejudices and prepossessions. He has no other standards than comfort and seemliness. Education is vaunted for its utility in fitting a man for success in the competitive economic struggle ; science is respected for its " useful " knowledge, the comforts it makes possible.'

To be quiet, to lie fallow, to muse over first principles and over unquestioned, unshaken foundations,—this is absolutely necessary for

the thinker who is going to keep his head, build any sort of lucid system, or get anywhere. Yet fewer and fewer men are ready for that simple demand. They like the daring and highest-coloured, the destructive and corrosive, the most startling guesses, the picturesque hypothesis. This only enhances their perplexity, or confirms them in scepticism or blank *incuria*.

Many a theoriser to-day, rushing comet-like through a star-dust of hypothesis and hastily accepted theory, finds key-facts tedious.

Yet all ' interpretations ' of the world and man and mind will be rubbish in a few years without an honest grounding in the very Alphabet of Being. ' Know thyself ' is still the winning advice. Many viewy, ideal, and facile writers on scientific, social, and like topics do not know the self: have not for years, if ever, patiently read a careful honest inventory of the features and faculties of the human mind and soul. It is plain that some physicists, biologists, and social essayists have never been put through the hoop properly—don't know what the personal spirit IS of which they speak so casually. Since the diffusion of cheap reading, the attention of the crowd has been solicited by appeals to read this ' daring ' treatise, the other ' provocative and novel ' book, and some one else's ' startling ' articles, very often on the gravest subject where

it matters intensely and permanently whether we have the right view.

If I want the *true*, it is no service to hand me the merely *new*. Truth is irrespective of calendar and fashion. It is not dates that interest me, but data. I would sooner be right than bright.

For one man who has honestly gone into theology as it really exists and is taught—for one man who has made a psychology text-book his handbook for a few months—for one man who has candidly examined the evidences of natural religion, a thousand nowadays have enjoyed and quoted breezy comments.

The finest and most useful subject that could figure in any education would be : ' The nature, powers, origin and destiny of the mind.' It would *steady*, poise and anchor a man's character and culture ever after. He would at least be in possession of a Grammar of existence, a Key, a working scheme. He could not easily be ' blown about by every wind of doctrine.' His mind would not be a draughty passage through which subversive or hasty views and theoretical fashions whirled and capered. Life would not be one dance of interrogation marks : we should not fail then to see the Gardener for the trees.

Incessant volatile movement is as tiresome and deadly to the mind as to the body, or to society, or to the nerves and feelings.

'For the first time in history there is coming to maturity a generation of men and women who have no religion and feel no need for one. They are content to ignore it. Also they are very unhappy, and the suicide rate is abnormally high.' So Mr. Joad. The reason for this unhappiness is structural and biological. Faculties essential to them are mortifying and hurting. It is Nature's protest against self-mutilation. Their supreme talent is buried. That talent is communion. They are meant to correspond not only with nature and other humans, but with their Source. Like lungs denied oxygen, souls denied a chance of further evolution first protest, then collapse. They suffer a more or less implicit nostalgia for the plane where they ultimately belong. They are 'victims of the need to believe.'

Who can fail to sympathise with the thousands of people who wish to keep a hold on belief in First and Last Things, when we see them exposed day in and day out to sceptical and critical articles in the largely circulated Press? Even if these average people did spend one hour per week in their church, or reading a serious religious journal, what would *that* be against the uniform remorseless pressure of contrary suggestion upon them? It is marvellous that non-belief and despondency have not made

greater inroads than they have done. Even the popular literary weeklies turn aside to discuss questions of God, the soul, belief and morals—mostly, one finds, in a 'disturbing' vein, by writers able in expression, but having admittedly only a faint hold on the data. Thus one week a very departmental scientist ventilates his personal view that the desire of immortal life strikes him as 'a sin of the flesh we have to conquer,' and the next week a more moderate layman asks whether we ought to expect God to preserve souls—why not allow him the right of an artist to obliterate work time after time?

Now there are answers to these misgivings (which shake and trouble millions of simple readers) which are simply overwhelming and convincing answers. But the anxious millions rarely hear them! The air is fuller of vague questions than of the perfect Christian replies. That is the result of these newspaper controversies and symposia—a general weakening of an already tottering conviction, and a feeling that the whole of life and truth is in doubt and a subject for head-shaking or debate.

As the *New Statesman* (January 18) says: 'The war was the drastic fulfilment of the instinctive social resolve to break away. In that respect it was amazingly successful. It swept away or put into its place much that had become

habitual in diplomacy, politics, morals, and religion. But it was in no sense a reconstruction. It left not merely chaos, but the bewildered uncertainty of mind confronted with chaos. It began in the spirit of Jazz; and the spirit of Jazz re-emerged in the years that followed. Literature was cynical and negative; art was just clever; religion all but disappeared; romance was an object of scorn; realism was "too serious." But pleasure remained.'

And in the same review, Belloc (February 14) observed that 'there is this peculiarity about our time, that the jaded are in the saddle. Their private misfortune holds the stage. There is as yet no re-assertion of himself by the normal man. . . . The evil may have been accentuated by the war, but we are all here to testify that it had begun before the war. No doubt our urban civilisation has a great deal to do with it. The dust of the great cities has no cohesion.' It is a time of confusion, touched by despair, very wearied and awaiting change.

The phase will pass. The normal will reassert itself. Soon we may be able to say good-bye to all that!

An age of scepticism has its faults like any other. It undervalues faith, and the qualities that go with it—enthusiasm, spontaneity, unself-consciousness, steadiness, and real self-

expression. So its secret cry is, Give us something we can believe in. The younger natives of these 'thirties perhaps do not get credit for their keenness because of a minority's aberrations, fiercely pilloried by novelists, publicists and moralists. But the satires in *Vile Bodies* and *Point Counter Point* are not very typical; the earnest disappointment and confusion of Press correspondence on morals and religion are much more so. Still, large numbers obviously are growing up with the sketchiest ideas about historic Christianity. Little wonder they cannot give it a square deal. If only they knew how humane and rich is the totality of its culture and philosophy, as its thinkers now possess it, hopes would rise. It might be possible to say of them, as Shaw said of a certain modern thinker: 'He was ultra-modern—not merely up-to-date but far ahead of it. He started from the thirteenth century simply because he wished to start from the most advanced point instead of from the most backward one (his own time). When people called him "archaic," he explained with the indulgence of perfect knowledge, that they were fools only they did not know it.' Well, nobody is asking them to start from that or any particular century, but merely not to be slaves of their own decade.

## III

### FIRST LANDMARK

'BUT,' some readers will say: 'surely the most subversive and sceptical people you could choose would be found to believe in *something*. If not in God and in a religion of sorts—then in the worth-whileness and wonder of *living*, in the dignity of the higher human faculties, in *some* worthy destiny of the soul, in——'

Excuse my interrupting. You are too sanguine; or you imperfectly know many of your *fin de siècle* people. With some of them, there has been a very clean sweep indeed. There is hardly any *pietas* of mind and no 'natural religion' left in them to appeal to; little of the old pagan attitude of yearning or reverence, as a basis to reason from.

No wonder it is hard, for a writer with the best religious argument in the world, to 'get it over' to-day in some directions. He is talking his knowledge into a void: they are not tuned in.

Lest it be supposed that I exaggerate, listen

to Count Keyserling, speaking especially of us northern races: 'Modern humanity has destroyed the forms whose development made our ancestors profound; and since it has not developed any new ones to replace the old, men are becoming more superficial and more evil from year to year. The great idea of freedom which humanity proclaims it does not understand *inwardly*, and for this reason it brings destruction rather than salvation.' And the American Professor Urban in the *Journal of Philosophical Studies*, writes: 'Of a certain wantonness in present-day thought there can be no doubt. We have suffered too long the monstrous irresponsibility of certain individuals and groups in philosophy.' And Maritain, the Frenchman, observes: 'The age is swarming with fools who despise reason.' Charlatanry and the desire *épater les bourgeois* infect a lot of current talk on science, religion, art, morals, and manners. Logic (which Herbart called 'the morals of the thinker') is scorned by the bitter, capricious type; and common-sense onlookers like Arnold Bennett react thus: 'I ought to have read it long before,' he says of a 200-year-old book of psychology. 'What measured wisdom: what close and intricate psychological observation. *In these matters we have learned nothing new in a century and a half.*

If it were written anew in a staccato, devil-may-care style, without verbs and commas, and signed by a young American or Irish name, and dated from Paris, it would become a best seller in two hemispheres.' The special complication to-day is that degeneracy sets itself up as a model in the persons of certain *révoltés*, and butters the slide for the ingenuous and intelligent young.

Doubt of *life*—of the act of living—is more widespread than the more fortunate people think. It is not that some of them doubt God or revelation: they have not reached such considerations. Disgust begins long before that. You will find this is so not only in ' bohemian ' or absinthe-minded quarters, but in students' circles from Bloomsbury to the Universities, as well as more workaday quarters; and the results are discernible sometimes in conduct and an open tragedy,—more often in talk,—and most often in mentality.

Therefore what vast numbers of this generation need first of all is that their faith in *existence* itself should be revived. That is beginning at the beginning with a vengeance: yet it is necessary with large numbers to-day.

As Descartes said, ' I think—therefore I am ' —so they have to be persuaded to say and believe: ' I am—therefore I am worth while.'

The task is to get them to see a purpose underlying living things. After all, all organisms have that implicit ' faith ' in existence and its value ; hence the instinct of self-preservation—a sign of sanity and vitality.

Equally astonishing is the immense physical and psychological apparatus, through it all, to maintain and extend the power of living creatures ; by the group-sense, altruism, parental love, and self-sacrifice, of which a picture is drawn in my Affirmation, *The Law of Self-Sacrifice* (1930).

Even the inanimate ' insists ' as it were on its own entity and place. Nothing that occupies time or space is aimless ; nothing that is in health apologises for itself, nor has any truck with the ' inferiority-complex,' nor commits the elementary atheism of doubting the worthwhileness of Being. Each is a sturdy self-affirmation ; because it is there by Divine right. It is needed by the Whole ; it has been produced and put there by a vast co-operant toil of event and circumstance. Supply here is the direct result of demand. Nobody is fundamentally ' unwanted.'

Surely conscious man is not going to let the humbler creation shame him ? Of course, if he is quick-witted but lives a stupid aimless life,—out of which he gets little because he puts little

in,—his judgement will be queered. But grant him ordinary vitality, a fairly clean bill of health, and he will overhear himself to something like this tune :

'Many things are not as I, from my angle, like them. But in the profoundest way they as a whole are worth while. And *I* am worth while. I have felt and thought, loved and admired the beautiful—in character, in nature, in thought and expression : and precisely for that reason I can never despair or doubt that there is value in things or in myself. Plainly when a man's consciousness adores and wonders at some great action or meaning in history or music or thought—he is himself, then, great. Sublimity is in the soul that contemplates the sublime. *Values are*. On that, we can lay great bases for eternity.'

The first stone whose weight it will bear is gratitude. For what? For existence; for having been created, and created as I am.

We assume an ordinary healthy animal texture to begin with, and a fairly normal set of faculties. But grant us that birthright, and we are on the way to a vital religion, a faith in the ultimate goodness of things. It leaves room for discontent with single features and a desire to change them for the better. But if you assume about anything that the answer is dust and

ashes—it *will* be dust and ashes. If you believe in life, life responds. One has to invest capital before the dividends are paid. 'What a man sows, he will reap.' That is eternal morals as well as hard arithmetic.

After all, every man—whether he knows it or not—makes his act of faith about life. Very well, let us make ours consciously; that the inner cause and nature of existence is rational, means well and not ill. This is the preamble to Christianity—that the sole final motive for creation must be good-will in the causative Power. *What else?* Is it so slight a thing to have been given life, sunshine, love, these awful spirits of ours?—these souls, with the delicacy and variety of their moods, their lightning-like susceptibility to impressions, their obeisance before the holy, their seeking after Good if haply they may find it?

Even the greater Pagans recognised this. It was implied in their imperfect religions—

> 'Where the ancient celebration to the maiden queen of light
> Led the long august procession upward to the pillared height.'

This natural religion of theirs proved historically not enough; it lost itself: it wilted and saddened as men went out into the deeps asking the crucial questions. Earth learnt that

'ere she does her heavenly-best, a God must mingle in the game.'

. . . 'Worth while.' Will this embryo faith keep the 1930–40 man warm? No: but it will keep him from being cold. It will definitely negative attempts to be wittily woe-begone, smartly cynical, too uppish or too downhearted, to muff at life or to doubt its possible glory. It makes away with a whole set of posturings.

The first bare article of this Credo is, that God at least believes in me sufficiently to create me: *He thought me.* As a living organised being, therefore, I express the divine Will, and have a divine necessity to exist here and now: I and you are as absolutely a part of the nature of things as the sun, moon, stars, Mont Blanc, or the monarch on his throne. This is not yet Religion, but it is the immovable basis for one.

Some minds do not reach assurance in this order. They must achieve faith in God *before* they can have faith in life and earth. Only God himself can convince them—directly. For them, the heavenly precedes the mundane; revealed religion brings natural religion in its gift.

Good: but to different minds, different approaches. For some, 'the visible world exists': nature, poetry, art, 'the hurrying song of rivers, the sound of rain falling far and wide

over the forests, the beating of horses' hooves over the wide pastures in alarm,' all the sights and sounds of this 'shaggy, sunshiny world' matter intensely. And I can take in no Religion which later on is 'spiritual' by eliminating or evading matter, which is half the universe and an unending sacrament for the devout soul.

Already this dictates two things—the courage of one's own self-hood and of living; and humility. The latter because it discloses (along with a man's worth and place) his *creatureliness*, —he realises that he is a product, a result, a being conditioned, caused and limited by the very Power that made and befriends him.

The wisest have always kept hold on the sacred obvious. They find one of the greatest pleasures in life to consist in the plain discharge of some visible or material duty. The *earth* is the Lord's—the fulness, fun, and meaning thereof.

The other part of this natural religious attitude is a realistic appreciation of the *powers of Mind*.

> 'Two worlds are ours: 'tis only sin
> Forbids us to descry
> The mystic heaven and earth within
> Plain as the sea and sky.'

As Coleridge profoundly says, Faith in this first sense 'may be defined as fidelity to our own being, so far as such being is not and cannot

become an object of the senses.' No half-views, please ! It is fashionable to parade the ' cruelty ' of nature, or the ' baseness ' of our psychic motives, and to omit the whole range of contrary facts, and latterly this has been done with almost urchin glee, till millions now think there is only one side to anything—the seamy side. But they forget one tremendous truth. If there are facts that shock man's conscience and sensibility—still there is something in man which *is* shocked : the moral idealist principle, the altruist judging soul. And *this* is just as genuinely part of the whole as the things it criticises. Nay, it is *more* significant, because it is more developed and conscious and final.

Most current talk is vitiated by elementary oversights like that. And crowds are stampeded out of their ideals by the flimsiest half-data.

Meanwhile, the people who pronounce existence not worth while (inconsistently dodging the hemlock), invite not an answer but a diagnosis and physic. The remark is self-evidently false—as a jarring note in a chorus is false *because* it jars. Much of the pseudo-pessimism and pessimism of the past century has its origin in the colon, and would yield better to treatment than to a treatise.

" I *am*—therefore I am *worth while*." That is creation's Dogma, heard like thunder from

all horizons. You are in your degree intended, a divinely meant fact—eligible for greater things.

Modern civilised man banks on the wrong things for his happiness and independence—on frills and extras; he frets and fusses scandalously (he even admits it) after 'position,' prestige, precedence, and cash; and his standards (material most of them) harden through his middle life, so that he gets nervy and prematurely old chasing them. We are slaves as the ancient helots were, and we reinforce our servitude with mental tyrannies and fears, from which they were exempt. What *is* that fictional 'success' men are spoiling their lives for? The finest form of Success is a certain indifference to success-at-any-price. The only true goods are health, the use of our faculties, touch with nature, God, good books, friendships, home, and so on.

Says the capitalist, Sir Josiah Stamp, 'I am profoundly moved by the littleness of the economic and political issues in the larger view of life and destiny. My sense of history sees happiness and purpose and moral progress persist in the most diverse conditions. Economic content is all relative and comparative in the most limited way. . . . I see no satisfying conclusion to economic and scientific progress without a moral and religious background. I have a con-

stantly growing feeling of the inadequacy of physical findings as an explanation (or justification) of life and the universe. . . . Love, beauty, goodness, even vitality, the facts of consciousness, and data of psychology must be included in any scheme of thinking that is to be satisfactory.'

And now—a word about the proper way of measuring things.

The bogey of several living propagandist authors, that with Christianity there can be (so to speak) ' no more cakes and ale ' has served long enough now and might be given a rest. Catholic Christianity puts first things first and thus introduces into human mundane pleasure some profounder values which instantly *grade* them. Simply as pleasure it is the best life, and makes the best of both worlds by not being gluttonous of this. Selection is the secret of life no less than of art. Preference and discrimination give life its triumph. Existence is not to snatch and be omnivorous, but to learn to be, to do, to bear, and to do without; ' I know both how to lack and to abound,' said one of its masters, and the neo-pagan doesn't. The Christianity in his blood and tradition won't let him forget it, and his methodical struggles are futile, too late. There is no going back. This cult of atavism will one day look as

'period' as Rousseau's water-colour of 'the noble savage.'

The real pagans (those with brain) were not like that. They were religious. They forbore from some acts from pious motives. They discerned their 'sublime *dependences*,' they knew they were creatures, mortal, accountable. They looked about for revelation. They would not, in fine, put up with the modern self-conscious throw-backs as complacently as twentieth-century Christians do, but might have propitiated the gods with an occasional impious literary gentleman.

## IV

### THE RIGHT END OF THE STICK

DESPITE what the discouraged say, a few great guiding certainties are to be had by determined intellects, as many good things can be had in this world—*on terms*.

Progress to truth means verification as you go along, and sticking to the ascertained facts. It does *not* mean—as some impressionable people imagine—throwing first principles restlessly back into the melting pot, or going back incessantly to beginnings again, or pulling up the plant by the roots to see whether it is growing.

Step by step, then, the modern adventurer described in the first chapter made good the ground as he went. What is the good of advances if we do not consolidate positions taken? Half the bewilderment of the time is due to that disorderliness of method, to 'trimming,' and to a weakness for misconstruing merely physical theories like 'relativity' to mean that there are no absolute truths; much to the

amusement of Einstein himself, one may add.

Thinkers are returning by degrees to the attitude of 'the Common Sense' of mankind. Living men of physical science like Jeans, Eddington, Lodge, Bragg, Sherrington, Dampier-Whetham, Thomson, and Geddes find that to penetrate the spectacle of nature (inorganic, organic, and mental and human) brings the strong presumption of a universal intelligent Power. If the universe is a machine, it is a machine full of thought: though many scientists, dissatisfied even with that simile, prefer the concept of organism. And Huxley's protest is now fairly generally subscribed to: 'Force and matter! These are said to be all. I heartily disbelieve it. There is a third thing in the universe, to wit, Consciousness' (elsewhere he calls it 'spirit or spontaneity') 'which in the hardness of my heart or head I cannot agree to be either matter or force or any conceivable modification of either.' Modern science has generally come, by stages, to the view from which most philosophy and all theology—and the instinct of men—have never budged: the reality of mind and its ultimate independence. And there is the important recognition of the indeterminist element (which Eddington even calls by the word 'supernatural'; much as

Huxley rather strongly called sensations 'immaterial entities').

We did not wait for the physicists' permission, of course, to call our souls our own. But it is interesting to watch the new tendency. It is fairly representatively expressed by Professor Standing, D.Sc., the biologist, for example, in June this year, in his statement that man's spiritual experiences are 'in line with the upward trend of organic evolution and alone give an intelligible meaning to the whole world-process.'

Much more does this belief press itself upon the metaphysician and philosopher; while to the subject and student of religious experience, the thing becomes a certainty on which he stakes his present conduct and his eternal welfare. One cannot stay to fill seven or eight pages with the august catena of names, right down through history, ancient and modern, Christian and non-Christian, of men who have held and expounded that belief: poets, sages, logicians, philosophers, scientists, theologians. But the overwhelming weight of the conviction of mankind falls on the affirmative side—and that just in proportion to the range of the data a given mind takes in its grasp. Darwin closes his *Origin of Species* with an expression of belief that this universe with its variety and grandeur

must be due to a superintending Mind. Yet there must be thousands of people who in a muzzy manner suppose that he had given the idea of a Creator a quietus : ' thus the whole ear of Denmark is abused.' There are a number of ' idea'd ' people to-day, especially our modish novelists-turned-oracles, who have somehow run away with the notion that the ' argument from Design ' (for the existence of God) is out of date—perhaps because they mistakenly identify it with Paley. It is evident they haven't talked with philosophically educated scientists. They are ill-informed. That line of reasoning, from evidences of design and purpose in the universe and living things, is as valid to-day as ever it was. The evolutionary hypothesis has made no difference to it—beyond a variation in some terms. There have been naïve statements of the argument, it is true : but then there are also profound and persuasive statements of it.

Long and sensitive study of the highest being we most directly experience—the human mind and soul—shows that at its best it is God's most *intimate* image in the world. But it is far from being the only one. And the immanentist or subjectivist is making an enormous error in logic in becoming introvert, in ' finding God ' in his own ' experience ' and refusing to look

above and outside too. It leads to the extravagant position that man himself is a sufficient ' revelation ' to himself, that God dwells *naturally* in the depths of every soul; and that if all our historic and doctrinal truth perished, still we should have our *selves* left, our private intimations, and so forth. All this leads to emotionalism, muddle, and self-involution. It leaves every individual to his own inner dreams, however contradictory or eccentric; makes him less teachable and objective; and puts a premium on the vague, the lawless, the eccentric, and the phantasmal. It is not merely chaos when every man digs in his private moods and consciousness, so that what the spade turns up is called, by each, however different, ' God '; it is self-deception: such ' impressionism ' is as treacherous to us as self-' expressionism.'

There is absolute need for *outer* data and correctives; for education in classic norms and standards; for a criterion of doctrinal truth.

The universe is naturally the *object for man's mind;* from the knowledge of it (and the beings in it, including his own being) he rises to the knowledge of God. The vigorous intellect, unless waylaid, presses on along the stairway of things to know their—and its—One End.

That being said, it still remains true that an

honest exploration of man's Personality and its faculties is one of the most settling, heartening studies, and can be of immense help to the reasoner who is seeking God and the truth of God. He must not be put off with fashionable catchwords, with 'isms that merely scratch the surface of the subject for the sake of having a dinner-table topic or an ' original ' outlook ! It needs an orderly mind, that can make distinctions and remembers them. He will take the ordinary trouble to form an accurate idea of the ' build ' of the Self-hood ; its powers and range—so startlingly above anything in the external world ; he will take his examples—not merely from backward tribes, morons, children, or diseased consciousness, but from the souls and intellects that show the compass and depth of spirit—and are therefore much the best models to study.

To-day ' the New Psychology,' oddly enough, is upsetting the idealism, faith, and even the self-respect of thousands of impressionable people. (Strictly it isn't new at all, as Mr. Theodore Faithfull proves in his brilliant new treatise *Plato and the ' New ' Psychology*.) The secret is this : there is always a materialist or cynical mentality abroad in the world ; it temporarily (quite temporarily) captures one science or interest after another, and tries to manipulate

it. Once it was biology that was exploited; then sociology. To-day it is psychology; that is all. The error is in due course identified, and thereby rendered innocuous, at least for the sensible minority. It is the literary popularisers who are usually panting in the rear; the popular middlemen of knowledge go on with the errors some time after the real researchers and philosophers have shed them. Thus, one regrets to say that the eager, brilliant Mr. Wells, in *The Open Conspiracy*, in all good faith says:

'Following upon the biological advances that have made us recognise fish and amphibian in the bodily structure of man, have come parallel developments in which we see elemental fear and lust and self-love moulded, modified, and exalted under the stress of social progress, into intricate human motives.' As though the soul were but Caliban camouflaged!

Now if we know philosophy, from Aristotle downward, we may reply (in the latest idiom of a contemporary like Joad) with this Golden Rule of interpretation: 'When we have to deal with growing and developing things, with living organisms, with the institutions in which they are organised, and the activities in which they find expression, the explanation of their present state in terms of the *origin* is inadequate.

This statement is true both of morals and of religion. . . .

'In its account of religion, and not of religion alone, psycho-analysis makes the mistake of identifying, and therefore confusing, the unconscious trends of our nature with their conscious outcrop. Unmasking the malevolence of our unconscious wishes, analysts exhibit the ingenuity with which they are sublimated to appear honourable; they succeed'—so Mr. Joad says, though I do not agree—'but they also exhibit the efficiency with which they are sublimated so that they *are indeed* honourable. One day, no doubt, psycho-analysts will succeed, if they have not done so already, in reducing the sense of duty to something else—probably to something discreditable, but this would not explain away the sense of duty any more than the successful reduction of matter to electricity explains away matter, or of religion to the desires and needs of which it can be shown to be a sublimation explains away religion.

'For this reason, criticisms of religion urged by psycho-analysts, valid up to a point, are valueless beyond it. It is not that they are not true, but that they are incomplete. There will always be in it an element to which the Freudian, or anthropological, or the social, or any other

similar account of the appeal and function of religion will not only not apply, but which it will completely *falsify*.'

Hume really anticipated Freud and the psycho-analysts; only what *they* call 'complexes' he (preferring good English) called states of consciousness, propensities, and habitudes. But his central *gaffe* is reproduced by them: they fail to see or value the abiding Self as the thread which unites (and distinguishes itself from) the states. The moods and feelings exist, but not as a swarm or tangle; they exist, but *to it*, held together, and related, and thought about by this single pervading principle, the Soul proper. A thrill of pleasure, a pang of remorse, a stab of fear, do not feel themselves. It is the *I* that has them—what the more lucid Spencer called 'the permanent nexus which is never itself a state of consciousness, but which holds all states of consciousness together.' Actually they do not see the radical difference between 'changes of states of consciousness' and *consciousness of change!* They miss, as Hoffding said, the main point about our psychic life.

'Modern psychologists, especially psycho-analysts, are continually deriding religious beliefs on the ground that they spring from tainted motives (adds Joad). They often argue

as if, while everyone else's intellectual motives were tainted, they alone are animated by the single and simple desire to discover the truth. It never seems to occur to them that the desire to discredit religion may be as strong as the desire to believe in it. . . . Religion, Freud concludes, is derivable in part from the Oedipus complex ; so, incidentally, are most of the other manifestations of the human spirit. The conclusion once announced, the evidence is subjected to the most intolerable strain to support it. . . . Such instances could be multiplied a hundred-fold. Again and again the critics of religion are seen to be guilty of the same process of rationalisation in the interests of their unconscious wishes as that which they detect and criticise in its apologists—inevitably if they are right. I merely point out that, if we accept their account, it operates against its exponents as effectively as against the believers and apologists for religion.'

And the moral ?

It is that ' if you want to know the nature of man, you must take him at the full flood of his energies and exercise of his powers ; you must take him, in fact, *at his zenith*. Until he reaches it, he is not yet completely himself, he is only trying to become himself.'

So with a church or state, a race or an indi-

vidual. To understand the nature of any, you must not merely look to its beginnings, not even to its present stage of development, but to its fully developed condition—body, mind, and soul. Till that is realised its nature is not properly revealed. We must know its past, no doubt, but to understand it we must seek to forecast its future, its goal, its potentialities; for this in part determines and renders intelligible the present. 'It is determined from in front by its future. We must, in a word, introduce the notion of *purpose*.' And this conclusion is 'in accordance with, indeed it is demanded by, the teaching of evolution' (Chapter VIII of *The Present and Future of Religion*, 1930). Good advice at a time when our imagination has been fouled and our thought enervated by some particularly inept versions of human personality, of the origins of religion, and of the genesis of conscious motive.

We are all a bit craven about reputations, and it will do us no harm for once to undertake a little plain thinking for ourselves. Before we submit to the claims of a filleted or standardised religion, it is worth any man's while to investigate the views expressed alongside the canons of common sense; to ask whether they even cohere; and to see whether they will stay the course.

There is at least one 'outline' which Mr. Wells, both in talk and books, is just now eager to obliterate—the outline of the Self. Thus: 'The conception of individuality has been influenced and relaxed by biological thought, so that we do not think so readily of the individual *contra mundum* as our fathers did. . . . Man's soul is no longer his own. It is, he discovers, part of a greater being which lived before he was born, and will survive him. The idea of a survival of the definite individual, with all the accidents and idiosyncrasies of his temporal nature upon him (*sic!*), dissolves to nothing in this new view of immortality.'

But really! From S. Paul to Burke and the late Bernard Bosanquet, idealist thinkers have known perfectly well that the soul is a member of a vaster order in time and life, and 'does not live or die to itself,' but is part of a web of life—past, present, and future—with the Divine at the centre: that it is born, grows, develops, and so on. But what on earth has that to do with notions of the blotting out of the unique psychical centre at bodily death? Two utterly different things are being innocently confused!

It may be pleasant for some temperaments to look at the time when 'all this personal dream is fled.' But it is not quite sane, not usual, and not the mood of health. More

important, neither reason nor fact points that way. And some of us are more interested in what makes good science and philosophy than in what makes effective writing. A thorough science of mind suggests rather that

> ' Eternal Form shall still divide
> The eternal soul from all beside.'

The note of all spirit is *Distinctness*. It is for *that*, that we are evolved and individuated by divine Intelligence (as I argue in later chapters on Individuality and on Survival).

Let us look round at things as they are, and recognise the fact that the million who read nowadays are mainly influenced in their beliefs, vaguely though powerfully, by novelists and artists—not by trained thinkers at all ; and one of the fashions has been to exalt the ' instinctive,' hedonist, sensuous life here and now as the only life we shall get—and to relegate the ' full-grown energies of heaven ' and the spiritual life attainable on earth to the region of myth—beautiful or hateful according to whim. Some novelists and a few minor poets are musical and plausible on this theme ; in prose, people read Mr. Wells on his composure in facing personal extinction, Mr. J. S. (or Mr. J. B. S.) Haldane doing likewise, and Mr. B. Russell stoically welcoming it. A Niagara of vague, indirect negative suggestion pours out, and few ever study anything

written in other periods or peruse serious studies on these subjects.

By most of them it is not argued. It is just assumed. They 'feel' it to be probable, and 'feelings' settle these things for the public's writing darlings. Rigorous inquiry into the nature of personality would be too much of a bore; yet if they could manage it, it would pay—pay in tranquil certainties, however few; pay in giving a critical standard by which to test large generalisations; although, by curtailing their output, it would admittedly *not* pay.

Once realise what soul *is*, once concede even that a purposive Divine Being exists, and this cloudy assumption that 'absorption' is the fate of morally differentiated individualities is seen to be due to a failure of clear thinking. It is repugnant to the very idea and purpose for which spiritual entities have been individuated at all by the Divine action. It also presents an objectionably primitive picture of the Divine: it equates Him, one might almost say, with those forms of life—far down in the scale—which dispose of their off-spring by absorption. The idea is sub-moral and naïve, being physiological and zoological rather than psychological and theological. It makes nonsense of the whole majestic process of spiritual development. It is

destructive of personal values and entity. To talk of a ' reservoir ' of consciousness in which we are swallowed, and other quantitative images, is merely materialism that is not aware of itself. They do not perceive that spirits are—that all spiritual existence is—essentially distinctness, individuation, differentiation. ' In the universe of subjective being, metamorphoses of the *terms* of an individual life may be possible to an indefinite extent, but the basal factor of the *I* escapes deletion, and in each ego that which is indestructible is its " feeling " of I.' (*The Indelible Factor of Individual Sentient Life*, by G. Burchell. Blackwell, Oxford.)

Again, no man can possibly know what he is —what he is capable of—what his destiny ought to be—till he has been dilated and taught by a great love or ideal devotion. He has not the starting data for it. Strictly speaking, he ought not to put pen to paper on moral or mystical subjects, on God or immortality, till he has been through the appropriate order of experience. And in religious comment, again, till he has had his apprehensions, however tentative, of (say) ' the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,' one wonders precisely what *are* his qualifications for writing about the pith of Christianity, and the quality of its Life that is Eternal, and so on. Such hardihood would not be encouraged in

the field of the higher mathematics or any other department of thought.

The truest man (we repeat) is the completest, richest man. Because he has most in him—most truth and reality in him. Therefore to have any trustworthy conceptions of the soul or eternal life, its quality and possibilities, the fullest available authority (obviously) is the saint, the mystic, the spiritual man, the man of communion : for he is the very being we are looking for—though here he is in the chrysalis stage. He does not know all completely, but he knows something with tremendous immediacy. The way to know the destiny of the soul (by discovering its calibre and capacity) is to expand, fill, and exercise it. It lives and breathes (says one of its closest observers) ' by admiration, hope and love,' by worship, reverence, awe, communion, and that second-sight which is faith. Let it off the chain of convention and habit, put it under a good teacher, and it finds out its proper air. With almost scientific precision it has been put :

' With the invisible world doth our greatness make abode,
There harbours : whether we be young or old,
Our destiny, our being's heart and home
Is with infinitude, and only there,
With hope it is, hope that never can die,
Effort, and expectation, and desire,
And something evermore about to be.'

The best evidence of immortality is in the soul that is living the life now that is *worthy* of immortality. It knows that this enormous devotion and aspiration, directed on God, is not a germ without growth, a love without adequate sequel, a blossom without fruit. It knows this by reason, by analogy, and by faith. (1) By reason, because there is no faculty or vision evolved without having somewhere its appropriate and equivalent Source, cause, and theatre: and we are conscious that there is in us an enormous Remainder or margin of love, reverence, and devotion which no mortal phenomenon can possibly occupy or exhaust. (2) By analogy, because wherever you see wings, you know there are atmosphere and flight: where there are teeth, there are food and mastication: where there are claws, there are concrete things to grasp—and where there are faculties, there are corresponding and adequate objects. (3) By faith, because this Life 'bears witness with our spirits that we are sons'; this is as perfectly identifiable and trustworthy as any experience.

As Joad puts it:

'This material world is moulded and infused by a spirit of life. Moreover it is *not the only world;* behind and beyond is the world of value, permanent and perfect. Our conceptions of beauty, of goodness and of God are not,

therefore, figments of desire and wraiths of the imagination, will-o'-the-wisps to lead astray the fond and the foolish, but *life's recognition in us, its most advanced representatives, of the existence of that other world, and an acknowledgement of its compelling power.* For life is not a pointless journey, but a crusade through the world of matter in search of the world of value and perfection, and evolution is the process of life's development as it seeks to equip itself for the apprehension of that world. . . . The spiritual loneliness of the agnostic's universe reflects unfavourably upon men's lives.'

Enough then of this dull harping on alleged material origins: they elucidate nothing. It does not detract from the vital wonder of a peacock or nightingale to hear they issue from a 'mere' egg: in face of such magic you simply have to revise your notions of the egg, or of the creative Will behind. If religion had humble origins—what about science, art, and manners? And that Plato 'began' as an embryo is a quarter-truth which leaves the whole essential Plato unaccounted for. The fact is, the evolutionary process is qualified every moment by an unseen Co-efficient: the Artist is none the less effectual because he isn't seen, like some of his works.

# V

## THE WORLD WITHIN

'Popular education, thanks also to the Press, the film, and the wireless, has succeeded in furnishing the average mind scrappily, though somewhat effectively, with ill-digested bits of Freud and Jung, Behaviourism and contraception and various odds and ends. Those who know better *are afraid to speak out*, but keep step with the average mind.

'We have not the time nor the competence to judge about the problems that face us; nor have we the inclination to trust the leaders who have the proportioned perspective. As the mass is the most significant factor, its opinions prevail over those of the thinking few. A sort of Gresham's law of mental currency, by which good, well-considered opinion is being constantly driven out by that which is hasty, impulsive, and bad, operates.'—PROF. RADHAKRISHNAN in *Kalki, or the Future of Civilisation.*

I HAVE said that a thorough grounding in the study of the Mind is a sovereign preventative and cure of most, at any rate, of the easy current forms of non-belief. There is not time perhaps to teach this science in our schools or colleges. Nor the taste or ability for it among the pupils.

But what a different world it would be, mentally and otherwise, if there were!

Man is necessarily your point of departure, whether you discern the universe as mechanical,

intellectual, vital, or spiritual. The only question is whether you construe it by his *highest* characteristics; by the *middle* attributes which we share with the humblest organisms; or by the *lowest*, the material. Yet we don't include, even in our so-called 'higher education,' three hours' a week study of the powers and 'structure' of the human soul. Those powers are more astonishing the more they are gone into. The student after some years of close scrutiny echoes all that the Greeks, and 'Hamlet,' the philosophers and Fathers, Emerson, Wordsworth, and the poets have said of the mind. It is a growing, inward world. That is the description used by Bosanquet in his *Destiny and Value of the Finite Individual*. The famous passage of Augustine on the world of the Mind leaps to the pen as an introduction:

'I will pass then beyond this power of my nature, rising by degrees unto Him who made me. And I come to the fields and spacious palaces of my memory, where are the treasures of innumerable images. There is stored up also whatsoever we think, and what we have anyway varied. When I enter there, I require what I will to be brought forth, and it instantly comes; or others may be longer sought after. All these doth that great harbour of memory

receive in her numberless secret inexpressible windings, to be forthcoming and brought out at need. Yet the things themselves do not enter in, but only the images of the things are held there in readiness, for thought to recall. Even while I dwell in darkness and silence in my memory I can produce colours if I will, and discriminate between black and white and what other shades I will. Nor yet do sounds break in and disturb the image I am reviewing, though they also are there lying dormant. Then these too I call for, and forthwith they appear.

'These things do I within, in that vast court of my memory. For therein are present to me heaven, earth, sea and whatever I could think on therein, besides what I have forgotten now.

'There also I meet with *myself*, and recall myself; and when, where and what I have done, and under what feelings. Out of the same vast store do I myself with the past continually combine fresh and fresh likenesses of things which I have experienced—or, from what I have experienced, have *believed*. And thence again I *infer future* actions, events, and hopes. And all these again I reflect on. I will do this or that, I say to myself, in that great receptacle of my mind stored with the ideas of things so many and so great. So speak I to myself—out of this treasury of Mind. . . .

'Great is the force of memory, excessive great, O my God; a large and boundless chamber! Who ever sounded the bottom thereof? Yet is this a power of mine and belongs unto my nature: nor do I myself comprehend all that I am. A wonderful admiration surprises me.

'And men go abroad to admire the heights of the mountains, the mighty billows of the sea, the broad tides of the rivers, the compass of the ocean, and the circuits of the stars—and *pass themselves by*. Nay, when I just spoke of these things, I could not have done so unless I then saw the mountains, billows, rivers, stars inwardly—and that with the same vast spaces between as if I saw them abroad.

'Yet not these alone does the immeasurable capacity of my soul retain. Here also is all, learnt of the liberal sciences—removed as it were to some inner place (which is yet no "place"), nor are these now the images but the things themselves. And this soul contains also reasons and laws innumerable, of numbers and dimensions—none of which has any bodily sense impressed.

'Let him who seeth it not, deride me for saying these things—*and I will pity him while he derides me.*

'The same spacious mind contains also the

affections of my mind—not however in the same manner that my mind had then when it felt them, but far otherwise, according to a power of its own. So that, without now rejoicing, I remember myself to have enjoyed ; and without sorrow I recollect my past sorrow.

' *For mind is one thing, body another.* What is nearer to me than myself ? Yet the power of my own memory is not understood by me, though I cannot so much as name myself without it.

' *Great is the power of my memory, a fearful thing, O my God, a deep and boundless manifoldness ; and this thing is the mind, and this am I myself !* What then am I ? A life various and rich and exceeding immense. I dive on this side and on that as far as I can, and there is no end. See, I am mounting up through my mind towards Thee who abidest above me.'[1]

This noble passage, like the whole of the *Confession*, has the discoverer's thrill which Cortez must have felt when nearing America. By right we are ' deep-sea creatures ' in the world of spirit ; and yet we, most of us, move about on the mud-banks. The possible dignity, sanctity, and reach of our faculties is an incredible fairy tale to us, because we are too often

[1] See also Bergson's *Matter and Memory* and his acute distinction between ' real ' and organic memory ; a distinction of which most talkers on the subject are unaware. Also Lotze's *Microcosmus*.

content with a poor scale of living and imitative thinking. 'Oedipus complex,' 'father fixation,' the 'id,' libido, or sex; such words conceal rather than reveal thought. Much of what passes under the name of the new psychology is the psychologist uncritically imputing animalistic motives to the higher life. A little practice of the introspective method would tell them that the mere solicitations that I am aware of, I don't identify my*self* with, *till* I have deliberated awhile. None of them moves me till I take them up into a different status, and make them motives of my own, attaching reasons to them, justifying them. And when that happens to them, they are something different: they are Ideas—spiritual phenomena. Our experimentalists, it will be observed, have missed out the Mind! They have misplaced what Arnold Bennett called, in one story, 'the critical, presiding, judging intelligence.' It is 'Hamlet' without the prince—a science of me, without *Me*.

Apt pupils are found in young people who scarcely know even that such an old and reliable Science exists as historic psychology and metaphysics. 'The field seems to be left entirely to the unorthodox.' said J. C. Squire, 'to the shallow, the smart and licentious, the undersexed and the anarchic dreamers.'

The immateriality (spirituality), the singleness

and unity, and the potential ' infinitude ' of the soul are facts utterly unaffected by the ground-plan of the instincts, which is all that some behaviourists, Freudians, and others know as psychology.

' Far from admitting that the play of our motives constitutes and carries off our personality (says Green), we are well aware that they are subject to our estimate and that we choose for ourselves. We are not the theatres and they the agents ; we are the agents and they the data of the problem which we solve. . . . The casting-vote and verdict upon the offered motives is with us and not with them.'

It would be very convenient to suppose freedom of the will abolished ; from the idea of its convenience, many have slid quietly to the assumption that it has been. The favourite psychologists of a period have a way of reflecting that period's wishes and tendencies. The type of propaganda against the responsibility, liberty, and unity of the Self-hood is as old as Hobbes and Hume ; the difference is that *they* were more promptly and vigorously dealt with than their successors appear so far to have been. Mistakes have also the advantage of novelty : doubt is picturesque, especially in a tired post-War interregnum ; the Answer, however crushing, does not look so ' sporting.'

Besides, young people who have seen their social and economic world in flux, by a natural but illegitimate transference of feeling imagine that eternal facts, laws, and structures have 'gone west' also, in some unspecified way. They fancy that because homes have been broken, self-hood and ethics have melted too. So the soil is ready for the most grotesque unscientific theories that 'sex runs all.'

How can a man get at the larger truth unless he uses all of himself to that end—not a single method only? What is the point of boycotting whole sides of himself?—the moral intuitions, the ideal or mystical sense, the emotions, and so on? Reason stands or falls with them, because it is a function of the same total personality as they are. The acute English schoolman, Alcuin, clearheadedly said, over twelve centuries ago: 'When the one same soul feels, it is called sense; when it understands, it is called mind.'

The wise man says: 'To discredit a fund of truth as "merely emotional" because I can't yet fully explain it in terms of another faculty (the reason) is absurd and unreasonable. For all this is not "merely" emotional, it is personal —the effect of the universe upon my feelings *in their vital connection with* the rest of my personality (not abstracted from me). Logically I have

as much justification for trusting these intuitions, intimations, and feelings as for trusting my reason—for in either case it is the personal being operating them which I'm really trusting.'

Let us have the pluck of our whole nature, and not live only in one mode or one room of our mental house. We shall get to know far more in that way. Feelings which are ideal, natural, and normal may be generously and conditionally trusted for evidence of what they feel. I may artificially cut up my individual nature into 'parts' and label them reason, sense, emotion, will, instinct, and so on; and then grotesquely decide to trust one mode only, called reason;—but if I do, reason itself tells me soon that I am deliberately *blinding* large surfaces of my manifold nature. The soul should be as full of eyes as a fly's body. Instead, with most men, not merely is 'wisdom at one entrance quite shut out'—it is shut out at several!

When a villager dismisses all outside his hamlet as 'furriners,' we smile. When a specialist in one little curve or phase of infinite knowledge has 'no use for' the segments of the vast circle just out of his routine, the smile is the same. Some of us cannot be so insular and provincial. We believe a S. Paul, or S. Thomas, a Wordsworth's reports as we believe a Newton's or a Sherrington's. And on the same ground

—that they have apprehended and valuated what they discuss. Their credentials are both good; only their pastures are distinct.

'There is at present a bewildering variety of schools of psychology,' says McDougall, 'in open rivalry and conflict with one another. The Press and the general public, in America at least, seem to be aware of only two of these, namely the psycho-analytic and the behaviouristic schools; and the newspaper writers and the average highbrow are content to mix snippets and catchwords from these two utterly different schools, ignoring all the rest, unless they add to their shop-window display some uncertain reference to the work of the mental testers. . . . Even the two popularly recognised schools are divided into a number of sub-schools; the psycho-analytic doctrines of Freud, of Jung, and of Adler differ widely; while behaviourism is of many types, ranging from the subtle and distinguished teachings of Perry of Harvard (of which it is difficult to say why the behaviouristic label is claimed for them) to the crude materialism and rather childish negations of the extremists.' And, he adds, only some knowledge of the history of thought can enable a man to choose wisely among the many rivals competing for his favour. Some developments have been 'a childish caricature of the Apollinian idea of

perfect intelligibility. . . . The stream of consciousness, since it is denied all influence upon or share in physical processes, is ignored as unworthy the attention. This result is achieved by resolutely turning the eyes away from all the many facts that will not fit into this too simple scheme, and by refusing to recognise the problems which those many facts so urgently press upon us. That step was so natural that it has found high favour with multitudes of freshmen and sophomores and with a half-educated Press.' And this radical behaviourism has ' achieved its own *reductio ad absurdum* ' in a psychology ' fashioned after the pattern of the mechanistic atomism now obsolete in the physical sciences.'

The larger and deeper view, in which poets, seers, and saints have usually been far ahead of professed thinkers, includes truths which the others persistently ignore in obedience to their trim monistic assumptions. ' We regard such attempts,' says the same high authority, ' as premature and as leading to the neglect and distortion of facts of experience of the first importance ' ; and only the recognition of the realm of events so difficult to grasp, indicated by such terms as *élan vital*, spirit and spontaneity, soul, vital impulse, hormic urge, can get minds out of the impasse and perhaps lead to a true

monism. It is a fact that here the poets, mystics, lovers and worshippers have been far and away the most genuine scientists, truthtellers, and adventurers. Why? Because they have most of the facts, reckon with all sides of man's rich nature, and know them experimentally as few theorisers do. The organ of the spirit is not merely the rational consciousness but the entire man—instincts, imagination, affections, and supernal loyalties.

In their revolt against the abstract, foot-rule school, writers like Mr. Aldous Huxley and the late D. H. Lawrence have said some true things, along with some that are wildly partisan. They are right in declaring the rightness of certain senses and instincts; wrong by failing to insist on selection among them, on the need of gradation or priority, of inner rule and *order*. They won't see that reason and conscience can be umpire without being inhibitor or tyrannical suppressor of innocent activities. I know their work from end to end, and consider that is no unfair comment on its tendency.

Many clever brains to-day are making another mistake—violently dramatising or discussing our impulses and temptations *in unreal abstraction from* man's religion, his tradition, his code of honour, chivalry, and affection. It makes readable intellectualist jazz and lively fiction;

but in real life, men dimly or clearly bring into their personal problems their inherited credos, sense of decency and fidelity, the nobler compunctions, prayer, pity for others—and a whole range of spiritual aids (which have been called the graces of God). It is as unscientific not to see man in this atmosphere as it is to try prolonged study of fish out of water. Many books run this bell-glass, vacuum, isolation method hard—till now readers don't even notice what is missing. Ours is mainly a one-dimensional fiction and literature; only the few attempt or hint the above synthesis at all. These puppets are actuated by gusts of the flesh, resentments, and bounded aims alone, whereas in real life (one discovers) the most unlikely people are at times moved also by 'questionings of sense and outward things, blank misgivings of a creature moving about in worlds not realised,' and by those 'high instincts' which surprise us.

With an incomplete or depraved 'psychology' so called, we shall never understand man, but only libel him. If a novelist or psychologist has not known profound religious experience, or moral vision, or the ideal love that alone reveals the preciousness of spirit in itself—what is he doing dealing in explanations or theories at all? He has not the data. First you must

*live*. Experience must precede any theories. Yet some busy writers with a blank *incuria* about these continents of reality set up as oracles, accepted by the clamjamphrie of the bookish and culture retailers ; and one protests against the flopping tyranny.

' All serious souls are better believers in the soul and immortality than they can give grounds for,' says Emerson ; and there is nothing like a great personal love (especially with a bereavement added) to disclose to us the secret of a human being's unspeakable value. It can be a stupendous and first-hand evidence of the unique worth of *spirit*, the sacredness of individuality, and of its moral right to conservation ; also of the ultimately spiritual nature of the universe, and a broad hint of the love-worthiness of the creative Power : for you decide that you can trust utterly him who was capable of creating X or Y or Z.

We get our very idea of substance, identity, continuance through change, and unity from our *selves*, from the soul. It is for us the very archetype of the *real*. The nature of the thing created is the implicit vivid indication of the intention behind its creation : it is the best pointer to its destiny. Moods come and go ; even consciousness is furled every night like a flower and is reassumed in the morning—but

the Self and unity of which consciousness is an attitude or phase *abides*, a profound and tenacious monad or centre. These spiritual, immaterial acts of it—sensation, ideation, memory, comparison, inference, self-consciousness, deliberation, choice, aspiration, love—mark it off from all other phenomena as unique, as infinitely significant. The physiological incident called 'death,' remember (and it is often forgotten), is an episode in a *moral* and spiritual history; and blithely to suggest that this sacred individuality is an 'interlude' for some vague 'larger' end, and is to be scrapped 'like the booths at a fair' (in Mr. Wells's words) is not only a gratuitous private dogma, but a dogma against which the whole structure, behaviour, and direction of the self-hood is a witness.

The mental moral facts we best know, because most intimate, are just those too close and inward for external 'proof' and evidence. Boldly one may say they are *above* it. Faith is here an *intenser* mode of knowledge. You do not know yourself, your wife, or any other soul *intellectually*—only personally in emotional experience, a much deeper, concrete way: why worry then if this is the way in which you can only know the Divine? It is absurd to want to circumvent spiritual reality intellectually in terms of images and formulæ when you do not

know the innermost stuff and constitution of *anything*, even matter, or force, or life, in that way. We experience and possess many things best worth enjoying without having a scientific scheme or explanation of them. Man was rich and wise in a thousand vital things before formal science as we understand it came. The scientist does not comprehend the life in his veins ; yet he possesses and enjoys and feels with it. It is similar with our experience of the Lord of life.

NOTE

Of course, bona fide applied psychology is useful. It is the mean interpretations tagged on that are dubious. That materialism (which is not science, but prejudice), having been repulsed from physics and biology, should knock belatedly at the door of psychology, is odd. We could not have even the notions of freedom, morality, or disinterestedness unless they had been recognised in contrast to mechanism, animal impulse and self-interest. If mechanism were all, obviously no other idea could ever enter our heads ! ' If,' says a determinist, ' a stone going through space were given consciousness, it would feel free, like you.' Not at all. It would feel necessitated, more likely—but actually it would only feel *movement through space*. Freedom is vastly different. Freedom is our power to discount biological or sense-impulse, delay decision so as to consult ideas, and finally act from some higher motive,—not lawlessly, but according to ideal concepts.

## VI

### AFTER DEATH—WHAT?

THIS is the intense curiosity of millions of men and women in our modern world. They will come more quickly to this point than to any other. Indeed, for them it has nowadays come to be the main issue in religious discussion. For them, it *is* religion. Hence the lively interest of the popular Press and the average unattached person in psychical research, spiritualism and its séances, stories of poltergeists in old houses, telepathy, or dream-omens. (I come to spiritualism shortly.) Ghosts are good 'copy'; but nearly as good are articles on 'What I expect after death' from a Labour M.P., an industrialist, a surgeon, and—to make the list utterly exhaustive to the modern proletariat—an actor-manager.

It is an odd approach. Still, it is an approach. The philosopher who has given years to the study of mind and life, morals and God, knows that this aching inquisitiveness might not, always, if satisfied, lead to a *further* desire to

discover truth, or to complete an ethical or religious scheme. On the other hand, it *might* sometimes. So, ignoring motives for the moment, we come to the question itself.

The main arguments for eternal life have been (1) moral and metaphysical for the philosophers, and (2) spiritual and mystical as well for the Church. It was well put thus : 'Anything is possible, surely, rather than that these spirits of ours which have had intimate dealings with God, should be given over by him to perish.' The assurance is based on faith—the vivid, personal conviction that the Source of these self-conscious moral souls is faithful to them.

One sometimes hears it said :

'I suppose I shall live after my physical death—in the lives of my children.'

There was a time when that impressed me. It is analysis that spoils its effect. Analysis shows several humiliating facts. First, my son —at the very highest computation—carries in his veins only a part of me : 50 per cent of his blood is drawn from my wife's ancestry—and crops out vigorously in ways which, however interesting, are not mine ! I don't see much of myself in him. (Nearly every father will be able to say the same of his.) Boys frequently take after their grandfathers, not after their

fathers. Notoriously they kick against following in the paternal vocation, thoughts, or footsteps. I am not being querulous about it! If your son reacts in this way to you (naturally, and without animus) you served your parent similarly.

Let us brace ourselves to consider next the swiftness with which you and I reach oblivion among our tiny circle after death, the thoroughness with which our work and methods are subsumed into later readjustments, changed, and forgotten beyond identification. The efforts of most men have less length of life than the inscription on their headstones. *Earthly* remembrance is beyond words tenuous and illusory. 'Alas, poor Yorick!'—the thin mundane 'hope' will never get beyond that exclamation. With what an effort, against the grain, it is that we recall X——, who ten months ago was working at the next desk! The same effort will be necessary to recall you and me, a year after the mould has settled. It is just as well to be men and face this, waving aside the dill-water *placebo* of 'surviving influence.' It is a very 'dusty answer' indeed.

And there are sterner reasons why there is not much in this notion of organic 'continuity,' of fulfilment via germ-plasm. One is, that the whole mundane episode is to be withdrawn

after its almost measurable run, like a play. And something disobedient and infinite in man rejects the prospect of this *cul-de-sac*. Another is that the Utopians' offer calmly returns no answer to the main question, What of the concrete moral entity, the soul ?

More awkwardly still, it is probable that those who accept this gratuitous and difficult annihilation theory do not perceive the scientific anomaly which it involves. Any mundane or racial tendency could be *as well served without* human spirit as with it. There was no *need* for this moral, spiritual, and mystical self-consciousness at all—if the goal of this tiny globe (its lease running out) is merely a utopia, an arcady, a rational millennium. The spirit as we know it has, on that hypothesis, been produced unnecessarily : there would have been a tragic excess of means over ends, and a blunder is woven into the inmost texture of things. Rather than assume *that*, might not one reasonably prefer the mild alternative—that the utopographers have *miscalculated ?*—particularly as their idea has not been held long and may not be held much longer ?

Another way is to outbid the idealism of religion ; to take the ' lofty ' line. With these ears I have lately heard a professor state the view (hard to take as though seriously meant)

that the instinctive wish for personal Continuance is itself 'not religious.' You are bidden to consider it selfish or un-ideal. You ought to prefer 'absorption into the divine,' whatever that may mean. Now those of us who talk about such absorption have mistaken our subject and our vocation: we ought to be at a chemical works or a reservoir, for our ideas are running in rather trite materialistic moulds, and we are missing the whole point about spiritual beings—which is that they are indivisible, individual, non-absorbable moral entities! Why should the creative Power have troubled to set up conscious centres only to pass sentence of obliteration on them almost as soon as created? Why should the creative Intelligence have bothered to individuate and morally train selves—hoping, praying personalities, 'looking before and after,' and then leave not a wrack behind? The honour of God is seen to be bound up with the question, what he is going to do with the moral responsible consciousness he has deliberately evolved and called into being.

Individual immortality is not primarily an affair of what *we* would like; it is an issue that concerns the *Divine* justice and rationality.

Even pre-Christian man feels that this tiny limited cross-section we call life is a foretaste,

a hint, a start; and this planet is our kindergarten. 'I do not believe that our experience is the highest form of experience extant in the universe,' said William James. 'I believe rather that we stand in just the same relation to the whole universe as our canine and feline pets do to the whole of human life. They inhabit our drawing-rooms and libraries: they take part in scenes of whose significance they have no inkling. They are small tangents to curves of history the beginnings and ends of which pass wholly beyond their ken. So are we tangents to the wider things of life.'

While, if we counted heads, we should find a majority of the race have believed that from the dawn of history; if we *weighed* heads, we should probably find—taking a long historical view—that the greatest minds had believed it, ranging from names that are held sacred, the fathers of philosophy and the race, through Socrates and Plato, Aristotle and the whole Catholic tradition through Augustine and Anselm, Alcuin, Thomas Aquinas, and Dante, through Newton and Leibnitz and Descartes, to the more cautious of living philosophers. And the poets? The poets, from Aeschylus and Job, through Sophocles and Euripides, Virgil and Dante, to Milton, Goethe, Wordsworth, Keats, Browning and Tennyson, are

pretty unanimous. Almost the only recalcitrant is Lucretius.

If our professor was *too* noble, *too* generously free with others' destiny, *too* easy-going about the Divine rectitude, too vague about the nature of individuality—it is arguable that (at any rate) many spiritualists on the other hand tend to be too intent upon the individual or egoist aspect. (Yet this is preferable to the faintly priggish attitudes examined above.)

Like 'Smith' and many other friends of mine, I have taken a passive part years ago in many spiritualist séances, and examined its literature and phenomena. I overcame the initial distaste (natural, conventional, but perhaps not necessarily scientific) to darkened rooms, trumpet-voices, and remarks to me personally from 'beyond' about my past and future, which sometimes hit a mark and often missed it. Some of the manifestations I considered harmless and faintly credible; others dubiously interesting, when decipherable: and the largest percentage either odd, beside the point, or ethically low-grade. (One judges the disembodied by the same standards as one would judge friends in the flesh, of course.)

My spiritualist mentors admitted, and I soon discovered, that there was a tangle of good or evil in the communications, also there was a

mixture of the credible with unfortunate human duplicity. I found that there was required from me (1) strained vigilance to sift the plentiful deceit from the possibly admissible, and (2) considerable faith in the residuum of evidence and in its human channels.

I am not ruling it all out on that account. Such discouraging difficulties may conceivably beset a young research, especially when its data are of this sort. Moreover, I respect the good faith and intelligence of the more discriminating investigators like Lodge, Doyle, and Crookes. And there does seem to be a balance of evidence favourable to the claim that intelligent agencies communicate from the unseen, given certain sets of conditions. Curiously, this has not a composing, reassuring effect on spiritists ; on the contrary, the cult produces a disproportionate amount of ' nerves ' and instability.

But, for a system which aims to put visual and aural *evidence* more and more in the place of faith and philosophic proofs, I submit very courteously that up to now it has been—unlucky. It actually demands *more* faith of a sort, but rather precarious faith in admittedly very peccant and fallible humans, whereas historic Christianity asks faith in the *divine*, in the promise of Christ, in the trustworthiness of the Gospels, and the witnessing Church.

So spiritualism only shifts the demand. And not, I submit, for the better. If both believe in immortality, it is a different quality of immortality—and *on different grounds*. Which is the more grand, the more ethical, ground?

I heard Sir James Jeans only the other day say: 'Speaking as a scientist I find the alleged proofs totally unconvincing. Speaking as a human being I find them ridiculous.' One must agree with him that there are more *convincing* ways, as well as nobler, to enter within the veil. 'Any approach to the unseen world must be along different lines,' he said—the mystical and philosophical. That means—excuse my iteration—studying the constitution and faculties of the full human spirit; thinking out its implications and affinities; and making the obvious inferences Godward. You've got to *think*, in short! 'There's no discharge from the war.' And those who cannot or will not, will get no lasting satisfaction.

Why *should* a man filch an easy short-cut certainty, if he means it as a substitute for tidy-minded contemplation of great ideas and probabilities? Of course, if the seeker for these 'phenomena' is doing his honest share of Mental and Moral Science as well, this side-show may by some be permitted him. If not, he is trying to absolve himself from two things,

Thought and Faith. (By faith, I mean raising the faculties to the unseen, communion, ideal love, adoration, prayer.)

This eddy down a side-way is attractive, I know, to many of us nowadays. It seems to promise, by visual sense-effects, to eliminate mental stress, effort, concentration, abstract thought, reasoning, and mystical endeavour. *Can that*, I ask, *be good for us?* Must we put second the highest faculty in man, and by not using it endanger its future? 'We are too eager for rapid progress,' Jeans warns us, 'and the only progress that can be rapid is down hill.'

Some spiritualists concentrate on the phenomena and evidence; and then it is simply psychical research, a branch of science, though a suspect branch—good in its place, *but not a religion.* Others, however, do bring out several ethical and doctrinal considerations, the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man (incidentally, dogmas). In that case, and in that degree, I agree it is more or less religious. But consider. Implied in it all is a grave distrust of the revealed promises of God, which he must regard as a slight; since it is obvious that those who fret after these shaky, empiric, and unethical 'proofs' have turned down in their minds the Resurrection, the Christian doctrine of eternal life (outlined on a later

page), and the deliverances of philosophy and the human reason, as insufficient. I am bound to say that, with a few exceptions, the type of intelligence which haunts these dusky purlieus is the type of intelligence also which cannot rise to the appreciation of these finer, legitimate sources of conviction. Rarely do they study them or give them a place in their literature or journalism; and still more rarely do their séances touch upon them—which, if these were genuine or due to moral agents, they could not avoid doing.

Contrasted with the action of the Mass, or with a page of the Gospel or a Pauline epistle and their touching grandeurs and lofty truth, one is bound to say that this cult shows up as mean and sordid alike in content and appearance. The single item of survival is grotesquely overstressed, to the extinction virtually of continents of other truth and values.

But then that is already in Christianity; and we who have been to Lyceums and séance-rooms cannot for the life of us see what need there is for separatism from religious bodies holding precisely these beliefs. A spiritualist ought surely to be able to hold his special views about the technical evidence for survival without developing away from corporate Christianity! Harm, I think, has been done to the

movement because it has so developed; and there are a minority calling themselves 'Christian spiritualists,' whose title alone seems to admit this.

Well, that is how things happen in the world. The milk is spilt, and no purpose is served in crying over it. (Indeed the same sincere regret applies to Christian Scientists and others, whose beliefs could have developed far more truly in their proper context in the main Christian body.) Millions of us holding the Faith can say to both bodies: 'Yes, but we believed already! You and we (we think) have lost by your departure: you, doctrinal balance—we, numbers and zealous individuals. . . .'

'And now,' you ask me, 'what is the afterlife *like?*' We cannot pretend to give any picture. Is it necessary to do so? It's the fact that matters, not the how of it. Most readers of these lines would not worry about the details, once they were assured of the future Life. Instinct carries us along with an almost almighty drive, as it does the baby (for example) which does not know what sort of a world it is coming into, but all the same it exerts vital effort to leave the womb to get into the world. And when it does, it *finds the conditions waiting*. It finds mother's milk marvellously ready, a cradle prepared, love on the watch for it, toys, and so

on. Like the great philosophic poet, Wordsworth, I believe that ' he who fills the mother's breast with milk does also for our nobler part provide.' And with the same kind of prevision. Step by step these matters are managed, with a bounty and prescience which we grossly underestimate. It isn't only faith that is often feeble ; it is imagination too that is lacking.

So if you tell me you ' cannot imagine ' the existence of personality apart from matter, I reply that neither can you or I imagine many facts which are nevertheless real—infinity, for instance (or a limit to it, either !). The poverty of man's imagination has become a distressing axiom of modern physics. It is argument that counts, not our sense-images. If sheer reason leads us where this visual fancy of ours fails, do not alarm yourself : it is quite in order : it happens with scientists no less, every day !

Incidentally the quaintest ideas crop up on this topic. I know an impressionably imaginative man who objects to any sort of ' for ever and ever.' He can't ' cope with it,' he says. Well, there is no need to. We only live an hour at a time, whether now or in the future. Neither can he cope with astronomical distances—but nobody obliges him to ; he hasn't to live in *them,* he has only to live in his field of space.

And anyhow, infinity goes on existing just the same whether you object to it or not.

'I think it may be said historically,' said Belloc in March this year, 'that, just as the great mass of the human race have lived under the conception of immortality, so have the great mass of great artists. It is a recognition of something in man which is not subject to time.'

At the same time, it is a little presumptuous of a man to expect a *happy* immortality if he is not deciding its quality by good living here and now. Even an earthly situation can be disconcerting to those who, on reaching it, discover they haven't prepared themselves somewhat for it. Christianity is the one scheme that insists on this practical preparation.

As against materialism, I believe the proofs of the unity, immateriality, and indestructibility of the soul of man will win all along the line. But these do not prove enough. *Christianity goes much further. It lifts the issue clear of this level altogether.*

Christ never dealt in that kind of metaphysical and psychological argument at all. The Apostles and Fathers and Christian philosophers show little or no interest in such demonstrations —however interesting they may be to you and me as intellectual exercises.

'Survival' was not the point for them.

Mere 'everlastingness' did not interest them. What they declared was *Life*. And Life of an eternal, divine quality.

Now this is vastly different. It is immeasurably higher, in kind, than our metaphysical theories of the survival of discarnate entities—a shadowy theory at best. The soul of man inherits or attains an immortal and divine Life—how? Our Lord and the Church down the ages answer: By correspondence and union with the Divine. Life comes at the touch of Life. Genuine immortality—the only kind which such souls as ours could ever envisage hopefully—is to be attained by conjunction with him 'who *only* hath immortality.' Christianity is logically and biologically Theo-centric; it proclaims, 'in him is Life'—not in us nor from us. And it goes on to add, 'the Life was manifested, and we declare to you the Life eternal which was with the Father, and hath appeared to us.' Clearly it is shown as *his* initiative and bestowal, not our native right or achievement: 'to as many as receive him, he gave them power to be made the sons of God,' and they are born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh or of man, but of God. The whole *modus* of it is dynamic, active: it is shown forth as a tremendous 'working' of Divine power.

Probably not 5 per cent of the critics of Christianity know its teaching on this subject of eternal life. Strange, but true.

Christianity is pledged to no doctrine of *natural* immortality. It looks facts in the face as shrewdly and honestly as science. If man is to survive the grave it must be as man that he survives, and not as an abstraction. It involves Resurrection and a body. ('May your spirit and soul *and body* be preserved entire without blame at the coming of our Lord.') So impossible, however, is it (according to traditional Christianity) for man, as he has evolved on this earth, to achieve eternal life himself, that the Author of the organic process himself has come in the Person of his Son to rescue the crown and final product of the process from the futility of death.

Lest there should enter any misapprehension as to the agency determining this great kingdom of rebirth, we are told 'it is God who works in you, both to will and to do his good pleasure.' Man is represented as the minor factor in the beneficent age-long process, as being the subject of the work, as 'being changed' into the likeness of the Divine 'as from the Lord the Spirit.' The community of the saved, in fact, are but the extension or mystical Body of their Divine Head, and share the lot and the destiny of their

Head, from whom they derive their life forces; they are safe with *his* safety, and simply because of their oneness with him they are 'the habitation of God in the Spirit,' otherwise temples of the Holy Ghost. In isolation, man's soul would fare as badly as any other organism cut off from its proper environment and nourishment; but —'ye are complete in him.' The Christian writings are really a text-book of Life, and the phenomena and laws of Life.

'This is Life eternal—to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' To know, to interact with, to be related deeply to God: could anything be more explicit, reasonable, and satisfactory as a definition of the eternal life? It is amazing that ingenious minds bother so much with abstract proofs, evidences, and hints, when Christianity quietly *ignores and transcends all that*, and states instead the profound principle: 'Because he lives, ye shall live also.' The 'dead' (so-called) 'live to God,' said Our Lord: 'He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.' The souls he knows and loves are *therefore* intensely alive. Because a soul has been admitted to the unique privilege of being correlative to the Divine, 'friend' of God, 'partaker of a divine nature,' its future is sure—so is the kind of future. Behold, says one Apostle, awestruck and wonderingly, 'what

manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called, and should be, sons of God!' And then, still amazed as the prospects of life opened up; 'Beloved, now are we the Sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be.' Only the ages will show that. It will take an immense development to show us all that we are and can be.

That is the Christian immortality, one that is utterly different from any other, and one that many in the world seem to know hardly anything about, strange to say. It is a doctrine of immortality or, more properly, of *life*, never propounded before. It does not trouble about the usual philosophic proofs, as to the special characters of mind as we know it in man. On the contrary, it says simply of all that, 'flesh and blood cannot inherit heaven.' It is the regenerate, 'quickened' mind, the soul engaged with God, that finds 'this hope in itself.' The New Testament exhausts the resources of a wide vocabulary to express this truth. It says we are 'begotten again to the lively hope'; it tells us outright that Christ 'brought life and immortality to light,' implying that these gifts were *in the dark before*. It states as a new fact, that those who commune with God are '*of God*'; are 'begotten of God'; that 'he who is joined to the Lord is *one spirit*,' i.e. one life, so to speak,

united in a spiritual solidarity. It concentrates on this high personal relationship, and declares that vital union is the condition of eternal welfare. 'Christ our Life' is its central truth: (*not* the immaterial nature of the soul). According to it, the soul is 'kept by the power of God,' it is 'sealed by his Spirit.' Its 'conversation is in heaven,' and the whole operation is distinctly said to be 'not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God: for we are his workmanship, created in Christ.' The souls are 'translated' into the kingdom of the Son of his love; they are said to 'know that we have passed from death to life' by certain signs, and God's 'seed abides' in them. The Son has come 'that we may live *by him*'—and not by anything other or less.

Nor for an instant is it assumed that this true life is independent of the working of God; S. John carefully points out, 'We know that whosoever is born of God, the generation of God *preserveth* him, and the wicked one touches him not.' Nothing could be clearer. 'God has *given* us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life. He that hath not the Son hath not life.' It is impossible to enumerate the instances in which the Christian classic says all depends upon having the 'new life,' being 'born again,' and being 'in' Christ. It is the refrain of the New Testament. 'Your

life,' in short, ' is hidden with Christ in God '—not in arguments, however destructive of materialism these may be, establishing the simplicity and substantiality of the soul, and its possible independence of cerebral tissue.

And what is more, this living bond of Divine with human carries its own instinctive intimations with it : ' the Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are sons of God—and if sons, then heirs of eternal life.' Notice at the end of John's first letter the thrice-repeated ' we know,' an appeal to experimental knowledge of God, for it is natural that those who ' know ' God should implicitely know much else besides. (Life does not require outside evidence that it is alive.) So this Eternal Life is a new, distinct, and Divine Possession : it is a deliberate gift, God sending forth ' the spirit of the Son, the spirit of *adoption*, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.' And that is why Christianity is no mere scheme or philosophy, but a Gospel, a vital germinal process, a transaction and a communication of powers, an act of quickening, a new revelation and dynamic gift : and why Christ is no mere teacher or prophet, but a Life and the Source of new life. The gospel is ' not in word only, but in power, and the Holy Ghost and in much fulness.' Evidently Christianity is something absolutely *sui generis*, which

it would be inept to compare with systems made by human wisdom; since it is a definite incoming of power from above the human sphere into that sphere.

If it were not indeed for man's long habit—a parochial habit—of seeing the profound total of reality from his own tiny standpoint, we should be quicker to see the reasonableness of the Theocentric vision. After all, man is himself but a product, a result and a creature; 'what has he that he has not received?' His own powers are very limited, he works with a mind he did not make, by laws he did not lay down, on material that transcends him for the most part; so humility and creatureliness would seem to be the merest good sense on his part. Above all, in this matter of future development he ought to be teachable and meek. In the vast power-house of spiritual Life, he is an atom with everything to learn; here the Doer is immeasurably deeper, more alive and aware than he can be; and his wisest course—his only proper course—is to trust absolutely to the Lord of life to work out His eternal purposes through us and in us; for here we are dealing with wisdom that is unsearchable and power that is unfathomable.

Incidentally, the revealed picture of the new Divine kingdom is not only an advance upon all

pre-Christian or non-Christian ideas concerning the soul and its future, but by showing the Divine initiative 'over all, in all, and through all' it eliminates the human bias to decide or manage these immense developments *ourselves;* and it instead shows that receptiveness and co-operative willingness are our share in the great movement. Here, the supreme mistake is the fussy, autonomous or worrying attitude. Strain, friction, excessive solicitude are out of place. Our role is a subsidiary one, first, the intelligent, grateful acceptance of Divine Influence as a gift, and then the fostering of that Gift. Man receives from above the faculties appropriate to the higher career, whereupon his duty (also his pleasure and privilege) is to give them natural scope in their appropriate sphere. 'This,' said S. John, 'is the true life.'

## VII

### 'ANTHROPO—'

MOVING for years freely among those who wear the livery of the hour and repeat its phrases, a serious mind would be disquieted at the vogue of moods and assumptions that have not been examined, and have not come of study.

Especially have words a bad dominion over modern feelings or nerves. Take the word 'anthropomorphic.' Thoughtless writers imagine that quality renders worship or credal philosophy useless. And untrained people are at once intimidated. 'Personality is the last vestige of anthropomorphism,' says a new popular hand-book to humanism and unbelief. The remark is not new, not true, not clear, and taken entirely on trust—in all four respects, therefore, rather typical. It absolves from the attempt at clear thinking and faith those multitudes who do their thinking by sound—by ear. It is a real bogey in the path of many well-disposed people who do not see the deception.

It is a favourite weapon of non-religious writers, in the popular dailies and weeklies which to-day 'feature' religious criticism and speculation, to say 'we can't know God.' And the 30 per cent of the population which is intermittently curious on these topics draws the inference you would expect them to draw. Unduly impressed, they throw up the sponge.

*They are not told* that there are different ways of 'knowing.' Nor that it was not the agnostics who first emphasised the inadequacy of human intellect to envisage the Eternal God. It was the religious—the theologian and philosopher—who did that from the first.

They are not told that it is not our duty, nor possible, to 'comprehend' God intellectually, but to love, seek, apprehend and experience Him; a very different matter,—a method with which men are quite familiar too; for we enjoy, undergo, and benefit by many realities which we do not intellectually understand—such as life, electricity, gravity, food, love. Science in part describes and utilises energies and facts which it is as far as ever from explaining.

They are not told that the ideas of man—Anthropos—*must* be anthropomorphic to some extent. Any thinker knows that even our best ideas of mind, ethics, tendency, purpose, matter, God—and everything else—are necessarily

anthropomorphic: so are our symbols, as Eddington points out. And what of it? They are none the less approximately true! So long as you remember that they are not the *whole* truth, yet are *correct as far as they go*, you are safe. Correct the more naïve or coarse forms of thought, and you have done all that is needful or possible.

A reminder of that sort obviates a good deal of gratuitous panic, despondency or carelessness.

It is odd to observe the seeming anxiety of some antitheologicals not to 'degrade' the Divine to our level by our trying to open mental converse with him. I think we may take it that the Creator and Sustainer of man does not share that disapproval! Being Infinite he will make all allowance for finite efforts to do so, that are made in good-will. In fact, it seems likely that—if it comes to resentment—he would resent the *refusal*, the lack of interest to make the effort!

Why do not these obvious considerations get more mention? To-day, as 2000 years ago, the people are in many lands 'sheep without a shepherd' and are exposed to the cumulative battering of negative suggestion, discouraging all spiritual enterprise,—as if the drag of 'dailiness' and the world were not enough;

and the forces on the right side get a disproportionately small look in.

They are not told that their imperfect ideas and advances have a value in the Divine sight—that, however these fall short, they are genuinely actuated by the Divine and will achieve some positive results.

They are not told that there are different *sorts* of anthropomorphism. The one (peculiar to the ignorant, or superstitious, or un-organised) attributes to God the poor things that are in humanity and peculiar to it. But the other sort honours God and grasps the truth by recognising that something corresponding to humanity and personality *exists in God, because* these came from him; and confidently and calmly it attributes to him what is best and central in us—because, so far from being peculiar to us, it is essential to all intelligent, living, and moral Being. This is not the full-orbed truth (that can wait!): but it is infinitely nearer to it than the non-starters will ever get.

They are not told, again, that this knowledge is enough to transform the life and save the soul.

Three thousand years ago a sage asked: 'He that made the eye (sight) shall he not see?' Exactly: and he that caused intelligence, individuality, love, and the sense of values, shall

he not *contain* them? Water does not rise above its source; entity does not issue from non-entity; the glory of love and character does not jump spontaneously out of a blind essence, call that essence by what fine names you will. We cannot get behind or beyond personality. It is an ultimate: it is the fact we know best in all the universe, and it is the category under which we know everything else—movement, matter, causation. Even in denying it, you are exercising it.

'Hence,' as that sober thinker, J. R. Illingworth, said: 'God must at the very least be personal. "Super-personal" is thought by some more descriptive of a Personality that must infinitely transcend our own. And the term may be permissible if it is clearly understood to imply the inclusion of the essential attributes of personality—as we must call chemical phenomena supra-mechanical, or vital phenomena supra-chemical, meaning that in each case the higher order included and utilised the lower. But in fact the term "supra-personal" is often taken to imply such an absorption of personality as would obliterate its distinctive features—much as water in absorbing a crystal destroys its unity and form. In this sense the word is merely a diguised and therefore misleading synonym for the plainer term

" impersonal," of which it must in consequence share the fate.' (*Immanence*, Chapter 8.)

That is a useful warning to those who let their metaphors do their thinking for them. Scrutinise all word-coinages that are offered you. For words can become idols, and we their slaves.

The great logician and mechanician, Lotze, said :

' In point of fact we have little ground for speaking of the personality of finite beings ; it is an ideal, and like all that is ideal, belongs unconditionally only to the Infinite. Perfect Personality is in God only ; to all finite minds there is allotted but a paler copy thereof. The finiteness of the finite is not a producing condition of this personality, but a limit and hindrance of its developement.' (*Microcosm*, IX, 4, §4.)

For us to shake dubious heads over the question whether the Author of personality can possess personality is a spectacle that, but for its gravity, would attract Molière, Swift, or Rabelais ! It is as if the horse-tribe were to debate—and deny—the existence of sensation and individuality in mankind because mankind's mind is so much wider and deeper than the horse-mind.

Of course the consciousness in Divine untrammelled Personality will be very different

from yours and mine; but—may one suggest it?—it will be different *for the better*. It will be vastly *more* of a consciousness, not less. It will realise perfectly the idea and type which ours only brokenly hints at. 'Purpose in him is none the less purpose because it is consistent and unchangeable. Will is none the less will because it is unconquerable. Thought is none the less thought because it embraces the entire universe at once,' Momerie points out.

J. S. Mill in his examination of Hamilton's philosophy showed that the fancied contradiction between the terms Infinite and Personality was simply the result of confused thinking. On the contrary it is to God alone that they apply in their full and true significance. If the word 'personality' is illegitimately used at all, it is in its application to ourselves. 'Infinite Personality' is not contradiction: it is tautology. But it is a repetition we propose to retain.

'Then comes the idea of the Perfect Individual,' says Julian Huxley, 'something unknown to the senses, its characters a raising to infinity of these enumerated above. Such a being would possess perfect internal harmony and perfect independence (in our particular sense) of matter and of time itself.' (*Individuality in the Animal Kingdom*, Chapter 1.) Excellent! And it sounds like S. Thomas Aquinas.

'We do not degrade the Almighty by saying that he thinks and knows and wills,' said Professor Momerie. 'If the power behind nature were destitute of these faculties, it would be *infinitely inferior to the poorest type of man.*'

There were men at that time who seemed to think that the word Power was a good synonym for God, and that anything else was presumptuous. 'But,' as he pointed out, 'in Power as such there is nothing divine. What care I for a Power that is eternally unconscious? It may have strength enough to dash the entire universe into shivers: but I perceive that it is senseless and I look upon it with contempt.'

The same indifference can be opposed by the human intellect to recent pictures of God offered it: they are not even equal to the human soul in value. Mr. J. S. Haldane's God, or Mr. Joad's or any other deity which does not or will not 'reveal,' which cannot or will not incarnate, nor enter history or creation *in propria persona*, has the misfortune of all absentee landlords, that he does not in the slightest degree interest his tenants. One simply tells them, with Browning's shrivelling simplicity:

> 'A loving worm within its clod,
> Were diviner than a loveless God
> Amid his worlds, I will dare to say.'

For love is the core of all intelligence and all values.

'Surely it is too plain for words that *all* our thought and all our feeling must be anthropomorphic,' says the subtle and genial *Riddles of the Sphinx* (by a Troglodyte). Whether in science or any other pursuit, 'the proposal to avoid anthropomorphism is as absurd as the suggestion that we should take the unbiassed view of ourselves by jumping out of our skin.'

We are made that way. The Power who made us that way is cognisant of the fact, and in his relation toward us accommodates himself accordingly. (1) To strain and stretch excessively and frantically after an exhaustive intellectual *idea* of God is a forlorn hope from the start. (2) In the course of it, conducted on abstractly intellectual lines, you are more likely than anything to lose such intuition and communion as you have got via Religion. (3) The moral, and emotional, and practical approaches are just as important as the theoretic, and more promising of results. The best method is the union of them all. And even then (as any dogmatic Christian could have told you) your success will only be partial and finite.

Fortunately—very fortunately—if we cannot compass God and climb to the heights, the heights can *bend to us*. If the finite cannot

reach the Infinite, it is always open to the Infinite to condescend to us. Does the reader begin to see what is being hinted ?

There is one thing better than man making God in his own human image—and that is for God to present himself in man's image : which was done, as we believe, in the Incarnation. There at last is an Image-worship permissible and indeed prescribed to us.

Teaching about the Trinity and the person of Christ does not belong to this first statement about God, any more than an account of the spectrum need be given in the first chapter of a book on light. But I have at least demonstrated the inevitability of belief in the intensely, infinitely, extremely personal nature of God.

Throughout this book I deliberately put the modern man's thoughts in his own words. It is better as evidence. On this very question the easy remark of Mr. Wells that ' personality is the last vestige of anthropomorphism ' is answered by another of Mr. St. John Ervine : ' It is possible that mistaken ideas of God may arise through thinking of him as a man ; but equally mistaken and terrible ideas of him have arisen through thinking of him in any other form, and I am sure that the majority of men are unlikely to derive any comfort from a faith which is founded on an abstraction. How are

we to sustain ourselves if we cannot conceive of the Deity as one who is like us yet better than we? I cannot believe in the transfiguration of man if he is to be denied some understandable figure towards whose perfections and beauty he may aspire.'

And those awkward theories of a 'life force' or immanent Will striving 'it' knows not where, popularised by Hartmann, Hardy, and Shaw, require quite as definite an act of faith (Desmond MacCarthy reminds us) as any traditional dogma!

Finally, one is often asked: 'Do you mean your affairs or mine can be of any interest to the Infinite?' Exactly: just *because* he is infinite. Were he only, as many imagine him, very great and sublime yet somehow finite—then possibly 'small' things *would* escape him, as they escape our limited faculty. But the noted inventor, scientist, and thinker Sir Humphrey Davy was on this point in line with the orthodoxy even of the decrees of Trent when he wrote: 'To God the infinite, little and great as measured by human powers are equal: a creature of this earth, however humble, may have the same weight with millions of superior beings inhabiting higher systems.'

Such a fact, once ascertained or brought home, makes all the usual preoccupations of

man look very trivial; yet makes man himself of infinite potential grandeur. Compared with his intrinsic spiritual worth and promise, the mere *size* of his terrestrial home—the extent of space, and the multitude of worlds—are of far less significance and value; a mere optical illusion. Mass and extension have little interest for intelligence Divine or human: 'in the seeing soul all worth lies, I assert.' He is not a millionaire of worlds, but the Father of spirits, the Lord of *life*.

We lose our first childlike anthropocentricism only to gain by deeper research a more valid one, based on Theocentricism.

## VIII

### THE BEST APPROACH

THE plain man is sometimes perplexed to see that some able minds are believers and some are not. He is not always quite happy with the explanations—'temperament,' heredity, environment, influence, and so on. 'Surely' (he says) 'those other clever brains ought to be Christian if it's true?' This point will be met here.

Intellect *has* an advantage over the non-intellectual in the religious quest—other things being equal. *But other things are not always equal.* That is the point. In the setting up of a deep personal relation and understanding (like religion), intellect plays some part, but not the decisive, characteristic part. This is a concrete, pulsating matter—and the intellect deals in abstracts, counters, and generalisations. It is also a *love* affair—and intellect frankly does not deal with enthusiasm, affection, devotion, inspiration, and is not at home with the hyperboles they use.

Intelligence, which is a larger, less specialised fact than intellect, is more at home here. We all know people, not intellectualists, whose *savoir*, sagacity, sense of life and of persons are impressive—enough to shame many a savant and specialist. They tune-in more promptly and fully than others.

The conditional, finite, and imperfect character of our human being *gives the religious inquiry a specific character*. It is different in kind from any profane inquiry, as for instance an investigation into the habits of insects. This is put well by that thorough thinker, Dr. Karl Adam of Tubingen: 'I reach the practical judgement that my utterly conditioned being is ordinated to and postulates an Absolute. I do not stand on the same level with the Absolute. And so my mental attitude towards this Absolute must have a moral and religious character, that is to say it must be characterised by humility, reverence, purity, and love.

'We sometimes steal into the sphere of the Absolute and Infinite as though we stood on a level with It, or as though It were incarnate in us. At the bottom of all uninterested or autonomous thinking about God lies such a secret delusion. This secret delusion is the *real* source of error which easily makes the inquiry unfruitful. If there is really a living, personal

God, it does not rest with me, a relative and conditioned being, but it rests with God alone, whether I may know him. The question is not, *Can* I know God? but *May* I know him? Every solely profane inquiry is excluded. God will not let his fire be stolen from him. If my inquiry is moral and religious in the sense which has been described, then only may my mental attitude be characterised as positive and no longer negative, no longer destructive and solvent, but constructive and creative. Only in this positive mood can I surely interpret nature to its ultimate mystery and find in it the footprints of God. I see intellectually clearly how thousands of lines of the macrocosm and microcosm lead concurrently to a single point, by which alone their unity and their ultimate meaning are intelligible. But natural reason leads me only so far, only to God as the principle and meaning of all things. It does not lead me to a commerce of life and knowledge and love with this God, nor does it tell me whether such a living intercourse is possible. . . . Is he only the creator and supporter of my being? Or is he more than that, and *would* he be more than that? The inner world of God who dwells in light inaccessible remains for us a mystery kept secret from eternity unless he reveals himself to us in an act of the most generous personal

giving and by a manifestation that passes beyond the dead witness of nature. Thus the *inner* God, the *whole* God, the " mystery which had been hidden from ages and generations," is revealed to us men only by the fact that he himself speaks to us.'

And of course this is only in strict line with nature and experience. *The privacy of mind is inviolable.* Its revelation of itself to others is entirely *voluntary*. It is wholly by your grace that you let me into your confidences ! Useless for me to kick at this, and say I'll wring your secrets from you by my acumen : you only screen yourself the more.

One has to discern this Law in operation as between us and the Divine, where we admit it quickly enough as between finite natures. Reverent openness to the world of the supernal is more effective than learned reasoning. In this quest our attitude must be mainly one of expectation and attention, because the *adequate* answer comes only from on high, from the Livingness over and about us, so inexpressibly more alive, mobile, and knowing than we. What sort of Deity would that be who should suffer himself to be profaned, surveyed, and coolly calculated by anyone, like the sum of the angles of a triangle ?

And what is true of the being and nature of

Divinity is true of many ancillary facts about him and his relations with created spirits.

Our temper and assumptions here, even more than elsewhere, are of simply crucial importance. The intellect cannot stare straight *at* that light; or if it do, can make nothing of it. You will understand this spiritual law of directness from the familiar human parallel—that of happiness. This prize is not secured by direct action or frontal attack. Happiness does *not* come to those who irreverently snatch at it; for it is nature's way to give us good things by circular routes.

So it is in knowing God. For religion is, above all, a vital tie, a bond and allegiance; it is awed love to a revered Lord. It is not a chase after easy conviction, happiness, or security; it is a delighting in him—which infallibly throws in these other things as make-weight or largesse. It is not even a search for 'holiness' (or any abstract quality): it is a clinging to a concrete Being—and the rest follows, including not only holiness but *bonhomie* and ease.

Some of my friends toy with the idea that it is 'better to travel than to arrive.' Of course, it is not really meant. It would make an end alike of science, theology, and action. No journeys would be undertaken but for the pull of a destination; inquiry would be paralysed.

A few objectors to Certitude seem to imagine that we desire firm ground to 'rest' on, to go to sleep on! Why? Why should it not occur to them that strong souls demand it *to walk on* —as a means indispensable to progression—as a spring-board? Every footfall on solid earth is an 'arrival,' and a thousand of these constitute the journey. Each footstep is a 'rest,' a pause, but without them where would be movement? Certainties *inspire* to action. I do not find those men who intelligently hold some number of truths of faith are any less intellectually active than those who hold few or none! No. Every definition is *not* a disaster. If true, it is a conquest—and a promise of further victories.

*Science, theology and we ourselves do not live for doubt and inquiry, but for facts, laws, and certainties.*

Doubt is a good servant but a bad master. It is an occasional duty, never a universal principle. It is a terribly debilitating diet if stuck to. It is excellent as a *passage* in one's thought-life, but passages are unhealthy places to live in. Besides, they should *lead somewhere*. A man cannot live like the stags of Tityrus grazing on air. I have seen men who cannot give up the habit of mental loafing: like Humpty Dumpty who from the wall remarked in a

trance, 'Impenetrability—that's what I say.' An open mind on some things is good—but if it is open all round?

I would end this chapter as I began: the finding of God is an activity so full that it involves the co-operation of many parts. In dealing with *the* Personality, personal methods should predominate; and a certain way of holding oneself, a quiet trustful obstinacy of petition and expectation, are the supremely promising modes of approach—supplement them how we will by the methods of the academy or laboratory.

When Mr. J. Huxley says that 'religion is seen not as a divine revelation but as a function of human nature,' few see that it is *both*. Who is to separate—in S. Paul, S. John, S. Augustine—divine *initiative* from human *co-operation*, in this violent, abstract way? It causes a popular stir to say 'the idea of God is a product of the human mind': but so are science, art, values, morality, and truth too: which doesn't prevent the answering realities existing objectively, and independently. It is artificial to view human aspirations apart from God: he is *in* it; and the human mind which conceives him is his product before it starts thinking at all!

# IX

## LET THE HALF-GODS GO

HUMANISM is the recent endeavour to conserve as much as possible of the world of spiritual values on a merely naturalistic empiric basis. The experiment has been tried, with what we may now judge to be discouragingly little success. Constructively it is admittedly weak; like the attempt to make wheat ripen and flowers open after the fructifying agent, the sun, has retired for a winter behind the clouds.

In his *Preface to Morals*, which has had an immense circulation in America, Mr. Lippmann considers that the naturalistic view has made great strides, but that with its arrival has come disillusionment, and the former sanguine faith in science has faded, or is left to the misinformed or old-fashioned among the rising generation. He thinks the world to-day looks bleak to the modern man, and society is in danger of disintegration.

So he makes suggestions. Except for a

chapter on the family, they are not helpful. The cultivation of a large disinterestedness appears very thin—it also appears unreal and impracticable side by side with the 'new psychological' theories of man.

Some of us meanwhile are amazed, like D. S. Cairns, at 'the inadequacy of the grounds given for the abandonment of belief.' So many appear just to have 'let go,' and though they may have some personal reasons for doing so, too rarely do they provide them. And sometimes when they do, one positively jumps at hearing their casualness. Heavens! one thinks, can this friend of ours have 'cut the painter' on such hasty motives as *that?* Has one heard them aright? For it seems as if belief in God, in the great Christian epic of Redemption, and in Immortality, is held by some to be the creation of man's desires. 'But surely,' as Cairns remarks, 'that is well nigh as superficial a view as the rather *naïve* suggestion that the idea of a Sovereign God belongs to an obsolete political order and is incompatible with a democracy!' Is it not common to find that non-belief is embraced for flimsier reasons than belief is?

Something far more solid underlies the religious interpretation of life than any wish for human happiness. 'The rock on which the new Secularism, like the old Naturalism, irre-

vocably founders is *the nature of man*,' adds Cairns. 'Man baffles every attempt to explain him adequately in terms of those physical elements which are all that, in the last resort, the new Secularism, like the old Naturalism, has to work with. . . . When we have traced the entire pedigree of man back to the fire-mist we have not really explained him, inasmuch as the human reason demands a purpose and meaning as well as a causal explanation. This is just as much and just as little an anthropomorphism as the idea of causality. *Both* alike are obviously historically derived from the consciousness of our own wills in their causal and purposive functions. The great void which the triumph of the scientific interpretations has brought about, and of which Mr. Lippmann speaks so poignantly, is not only the emotional void of which he complains. *It is an intellectual void, which religion supplies, but which science cannot.*' Here and there religion may have been wrong, or but half-right, in details and statements about ways and ends, but '*at least it faced the issues.* And this, apparently, science as we have known it is quite unable to do.'

'Where,' the above-quoted Scots thinker asks, 'shall we find anything that can satisfy this *intellectual* hunger? It is not to be had in

the starry heavens or the green earth. There is only one place in the world where it can be found, and that is " in the Good Will," *and* in the personalities which embody it. We strike here upon something different in kind from the world of material things and forces, something which we perceive to be of a different kind of value. Mr. Lippmann speaks of the whole world of values as if they were identical with desires, and arose simply from the subjective preferences of man. But this is certainly not true of justice, sincerity, and love. Their worth is intrinsic. They are good in themselves, and not simply because of their consequences. Wherever they appear, therefore, they begin to give *a deeper meaning to the nature-environment, which it had not in itself before.*'

A universe which culminates in purposive, thinking, and religious beings thereby retroactively announces that it is *itself* essentially purposive, ethical, and spiritual, whatever else it is besides.

Dualism will not do. Plainly the whole world of persons and things is one system. But if so, is there any explanation that makes sense of it all, doing full justice to the elements of the problem, except Theism, which holds that God through the world of things is creating and disciplining human personalities in his own

image and likeness? 'The world is a vale of soul-making.'

And if the problem of evil remains—and the suffering each of us tests for himself—and we ask whether it is worth while (to God, or to ourselves); well, the answer to *that* will exactly depend on our estimate of the soul that emerges, its value and future, with all others like it. Let us not judge temperamentally, and in a momentary mood damn the symphony because of its opening bars or its first movement. *That* early stage is where composers and dramatists put their raw material and its discords; they keep the stress, excitement, and satisfaction of the solution for the third or fourth movement.

It is because a Shakespeare, a Beethoven, and a Tolstoy knew and did this that they are accounted as 'divine' as they are by men. They were only plagiarising God's method: but his canvas or score is the immensity of astronomical space and geological time. In this infinite work we individual spirits are the minims and crotchets, means to an End which we cannot by ourselves yet compass; but, because we are, like him, moral entities and spirits, we are not *mere* means, to be scrapped at some time; we are too like *him* for that futile fate. The glory of the sum of things could

not exist if the parts were scrapped. Each spirit or self is unique and indispensable simply because of its unique place in the Divine Will, and owing to its necessary meaning in the Whole. It would not be an integral Whole at all without such,—and the inference is that 'there cannot be one lost, faithful.'

A religion without initiative from Above, without action upon man from *outside man*, is still-born. A religion without mystery, the transcendent, the element of awe before a Lord and a Master, is ridiculous. *Man cannot beget upon himself a religion that will hold him or stay the course.* If you want a fish to live, you put it into water, that is into an element that is *not*—fish; the bird lives in the *air*—not in birds; and so it is with Man's soul; it cannot live in mere humanity: its element and oxygen are finally in that eternal and tremendous Other, God. We are straitened and choked otherwise, like Lamb's schoolmaster who was 'boy-sick, sick of perpetual boy.'

It is surprising that some able men fail to recognise this. They do, vividly—at times, in great waves of nostalgia, despondency or protest at each fresh experiment. But it is strange they do not—rationally, once and for all—fathom the cause.

The truth of truths for us moderns to seize

in the years from 1930 to 2000 is this : that 'Man' as a final or worshippable concept has been *found out*, surpassed, transcended. His value and significance is greatest when he is most receptive and creaturely. He is a fragment, not a whole ; a need, not a satisfaction. Man's sublimity is only in his 'sublime *dependencies*.' It is stark realism to recognise the fact that he is a thoroughfare, not a goal ; a pilgrim, not a shrine. He is not even God's last word—still less a god. He is a torso, implying his Other, his grander Completer. 'Beyond his own poor nature, and above, he looks.' Bacon said man needs a '*Melior Natura*'—a divine Master-nature—to elucidate him to himself ; much as the dog's nature is developed by the mastery and relationship of the larger spirit of man. It was a brilliant flash of Wells when he complained that to-day too many of us are 'master-less.' That is how humanism leaves us. Man is plainly built to evolve *vertically*, not only laterally. 'There is surely a piece of divinity in us that owes no homage to the sun' or to anything mortal, mundane, or finite.

Man has *his infinite side*. He has affinities with existence below and above. He is like a needle that persists in pointing *not* to other needles, but to a constant Pole ; not to other humans, but to God. And to refuse the religious

relation, the Divine nexus, is to deny the soul its right to evolve onward. It is the great refusal. There are sins and sins, but what sin is so stultifying as this?

The post-War craze, in novel, biography, and pathology (called 'psychology') has been to fasten on the secondary and tertiary aspects of man's lower nature—on his diseased states, morbid physiology, failures in instinct, egoisms, phobias and perversions. But this is not Science, or is only of secondary use in explaining man. It is often a sort of scandal about the *accidentals* of men, and it hides the *essentials*: it is the quarter-truth which can so easily be slanderous.

Are you and I to be classified mainly by our mental kinks, vices, and aphasias—or by our primary spiritual aims, standards, faculties? We see millions of (apparently) earth-bound souls, hemmed in by sense and selfishness: but it would be unscientific to judge man's possibilities by *them*. Surely we assess him best by the awakened developed types. And man's want of God is an indication of his draught, his capacity. Despite his spots and lapses, so well advertised to-day, grandeurs and hints of more run through his soul-life as wind lifts forest branches. He comes really upon his soul's essence in any great devotion to a person,

an ideal love, a cause, a vision of right or beauty: he is then most himself when least concerned with his empiric self which so fascinates the satirists and analysts.

If you frankly consult the central personal life, you will see that man possesses capacities of devotion to an infinite realm of worth—capacities of love, understanding, growth, loyalty and service which are (in Shelley's words) 'boundless, as we wish our souls to be.' They have also taken some creating, to use a popular idiom: and we cannot sanely believe these psychic centres of worshipping fidelity (such as we know ourselves and our friends to be) are eternally frustrate and functionless. 'If so soon I was to be done for, what on earth was I begun for?' is the crux question from humanity. All individual tragedies are unimportant compared with the answer: on the answer depends the point whether these in fact are evils or not.

Unbelief does not suspect the weakness of its position. For everywhere in the universe we find function remarkably correlated with an environment and destiny appropriate: *why should man's soul be the only exception?* Who first posed this single catastrophe, and why? And how reconcile such a discontinuity in nature with nature's notorious continuity? No.

The burden of proof is not on the religious : the onus of disproof is on negation.

There have as a fact been thousands of fine minds which have felt even now more at home in that greater Order beyond this present, than in the material scheme. *And they are the most natural types*—in any full view : the most matured and grown, they have arrived and unfolded as faculty is intended to do. Arrested development is by comparison *not* truly natural —though of course oppressively common.

Taking the man of religious instinct as the norm, rather than the moron or worldling, we perceive that the world which fits his powers is not this tiny present time-span. (1) Those powers *could* go on for ever, and grow, so far as we know, indefinitely ; (2) they *ought*, morally speaking, to do so—by their very nature they have the implied right ; (3) they do in fact ask and feel out for an adequate—that is, no mortal and finite—field. Their destruction would be against ethics, let alone love : but we have no sooner said that than we recognise that the spiritual nature of man could not be spontaneously generated by what is non-moral, nor could it have reached heights virtually divine if the nature of the universe did not somehow answer to it.

Thus once again, a discussion of God brings

us to the soul; just as, in discussing the higher characteristics of the soul, we come upon God.

It is irrelevant to offer this soul of ours, when it longs for the Supernal, a poor makeshift in the shape of helpless, bounded, needy Man in the same plight as itself. This is a 'stone for bread,' with a vengeance. Yet some of those who invite us to clip our wings, and become 'tame villatic fowl' do so in the name of humanism and 'science'! A wiser posterity will have something to say about that. It will be grateful to the obstinacy of the present religious minority, and describe it as a very eugenic obstinacy. The spiritual types of to-day will be recognised then as the guardians of man's greatest future-looking Faculty, his path into the abiding world; the *genuine* scientists and the true pioneers of the race. It will be a commonplace then that if the positivist or naturalistic had had his way in the years 1900 to 1940—he would have *interrupted Evolution*, stereotyped man's mediocrity, sapped his one central initiative, and imposed a closure on the one activity that matters.

Man, said a shrewder observer, is more than nature, 'and in that *more* lies all our hope.' His ultimate definition is simply this: *capax deitatis:* he is a capacity for God, as the

sponge is the capacity for the tidal sea, or leaves for the sunlight. Of course there are other things that can be said about him, and they are said to satiety; and they do not matter. At least, by comparison with this they do not matter.

> 'He sits here, shaping wings to fly,
> His heart forebodes a mystery,
> He names the name eternity.'

'Will men become like gods on the earth?' some romantics ask. Let us hope not, for his sake. It is so *limiting* and puny to be mewed up in a strait-jacket of time and space for a few years, when he can have this other infinite prospect—'a partaking of Divine nature' by intercommunion. *Supermen have no future; they are only a larger variety of ant.* The whole fantasy is anti-scientific. Let us keep it for boys' tales.

Man, who transcends one thing after another, in the end needs to *be* transcended. If I may say so, God's great glory and office for man is that He *transcends* us immeasurably. We should be decently grateful to any poet, prophet, philosophy or theology which holds up this majestic concept, and disinterestedly thanks the Supreme (not merely for concrete blessings, or guidance, or nearness, but) 'for Thy great *glory*,' his profoundest service to the mind of

man. I recall here a paper in *The Times Literary Supplement* on the value of 'creaturely abasement before the *mysterium tremendum* of the transcendent Deity': 'In the Roman Communion whose roots stretch back so far and wide in the religious consciousness of the race, the idea of the Holy, of the presence of the tremendous Other, in its aboriginal and undiluted meaning, is more potent than in any other Western religion.' Adult reflective minds have by now outgrown attempts to democratise, peptonise, and 'humanise' the bare splendour of truth, and to avoid the ultimate necessity of being Theocentric. In the end, the truth is best! It is one of the stirring paradoxical facts of life that the above massive vision of God *suits* humanity better than the pre-digested humanist versions.

You will not get this realist hold on God without helps, such as reading in S. Paul, S. John, and the Gospels; and in worship. A young Scot, Moray Maclaren, wrote in his book, *Return to Scotland*, this year: 'We (the praying, the adoring we) were conscious all the while of the strength and movement of the elements outside the church. Those of us whose minds are muddied by complexity or vagueness, have knowledge only given to us in momentary and occasional glimpses. For such of us the

sympathy of others' faith, the sight of simple obedience, the sense of the power of the Church and all those ordinary emotional stimuli are sustenances without which it would be difficult to support that feebly tormenting mixture of Hope and Love which goes to make our Faith. Without the perception of faith in others, the loneliness of the soul (which is the price we have to pay for that great gift of God—our uniqueness) would become intolerable. To rely upon these sustenances too much, to let them ever so slightly take the place of the true and God-given spiritual aids, is one of the most dangerous decadences of the religious mind. But they are there, and to be fearful is as foolish as to let them become master. It would be spiritual pride to shut out from one's heart the warm sympathy in belief around one during the wave of silence that sweeps over the kneeling crowd at the Elevation in a cathedral.'

And, talking of humanism and religious substitutes, I am all for a Simple Religion. By which I don't mean an artificially 'simplified' creed, with the needful historic facts and profound formulæ left out. Such merely pour the baby out with the bath-water. It would be better to say, an *Easy* Religion. By Easy, I mean that our relations with God, with Christ, and with the Company of heaven, shall be easy, loving,

natural, interesting, and sane. As it is the most deeply *natural* and right of all relations, why let strain and dubiety trouble it? As far as possible, eliminate such factors. What Arnold Bennett says of human fellowship, we can say better of this Divine-human friendship: 'The enjoyment itself, without conscious aid, will work all the good, the improvement and the uplift of which any friendship is capable. Judge not. Delight in. Luxuriate in. Any other course is only too liable to take the bloom off an exquisite fruit.' Communing with the Holy, you need not wonder whether you will become holy: look to this heart of religion, and it will look after you. The ideal thing to achieve finally (however partially or slowly) is this spontaneity and smoothness in address to the spiritual world. There may be self-discipline, time for study, work and observances to get *to it:* but the intercourse itself, when reached, should be a delight, and increase steadily in delight.

Some of us, who are 'complex,' civilised, and mechanised, seem to make our attitude to God and the sacred *too* adult, self-conscious, scrupulous, and technical. A mistake. Here more than anywhere we are justified in being childlike, docile, free, unaffected, unsuspicious, and happy. The supreme authority on the

Science of eternal life, in fact, has formulated this as *the* law. 'Except you become as little children, you do not enter. . . .' Directness and trust are thus the subtlest form of wisdom; here they beat bare intellectuality and erudition out of the field.

It is obvious why. Since the highest brow of us all cannot get the Infinite under it, it is a great compensation to take the other line—and get *under the Infinite:* deliberately to use reverence and humility, obedience and patience as the chief means, though not the only ones, to establish intercommunion—

> 'with That, which being everywhere
> Lets none, who speaks with Him, seem all alone.'[1]

All life consists in enjoying and using facts that we don't and can't 'understand' till long afterward. And if we show the same *savoir* in this great business that we do in our other affairs, we shall come to the great scientist's conclusion; when Pasteur said: 'My faith is as simple as a Breton peasant's. *I hope shortly it will be as simple as his wife's.*'

[1] 'Enoch Arden.'

# X

## TOTEMS

WITH all its merits, ours admittedly is a period in which numbers like to be run by words and labels. It is both a diversion and a duty of a keen mind to track and nail down what Ruskin called 'skulking, masked words.' A chapter in this book is devoted to the blessed term, 'anthropomorphic.' Here let us glance at a few other favourite totem-poles which exert a kind of magic. Some popular oracles who are taken—and take themselves—seriously are taken in by the counters they use.

'Freedom' is a good specimen to begin with. No two *révoltés* use it alike. Some would be distressed if required to explain—Freedom from *what?* Or freedom *for* what? Or to say whether the last state would be genuinely, on balance, a gain over the first. But the word sounds well, and it is safe to say that they cannot get on without it.

'Reaction' is its twin-bogey. If some who use it had studied etymology, to say nothing of

dynamics or biology, they would know that reaction is a universal function in nature—absolutely necessary to healthy existence. It may be the recovery of a person's or a nation's axis, a recoil to the base. When you return to some first principle or tried conclusion after a spell of experiment or error, that is reaction. Sleep is a refreshing reaction. So is play, or reverie, or laughter a reaction from the irritants or routine of life.

* * *

'Sincerity is the main thing.' This is another spurious coin in circulation. Sincerity is good, but it can be diabolically evil if involved with an error of mind or will. Anarchists are sincere. The madman who is sure that he is a poached egg is sincere; the criminal who had put a rival out of the way is sincere; war-makers and immoralists, 'life' worshippers and dislikers of mental or muscular work are sincere in these things. It is like other things—good in the right context, evil in the wrong. But in our time people tend, once again, to fix on the feeling and ignore rightness of principle.

'Good intentions' (closely allied with the above) is another mascot. But these don't save a man if his ideas are a-sprawl and his scheme of life is loose and unthought-out.

* * *

'Obscurantist' is another blunted word of abuse. Strictly it means a man who obscures issues or suppresses large tracts of knowledge or of himself; from which it is plain that we have many such among us. We have them in art, bohemia, physical science, politics; and one of their marks is to be vain about their up-to-dateness. Yet the word has been ignorantly twisted to refer to some keen and honest enough philosophic and theological inquirers whose subject-matter (by its very nature) is difficult, and who know that there are truths important to us which don't go easily into headlines and slogans.

Let us inspect a few of these 'idols of the market place and the forum.'

* * *

'It doesn't matter what a man believes—it's action that counts.' The most conspicuous truth in all life is that thought and belief can either poison a life or transform it. It can make or unmake a man. I know some contemporaries who have taken up with a theory and have been dead of it within four years. The soul is dyed the colour of its beliefs; they decide character, decide our actions and reactions, decide our destiny therefore. Contempt for the reason and the soul-life implied in that saying may

be excused by ignorance of life. Morality is not merely a social matter. It is the larger part of morality to conduct one's thoughts and belief aright, and it is a disgrace to have a head empty of ideal convictions. Consider. One of the few remaining ways in which modern man can be *free* (in a time of increasing mass-phrases, machines, and standardisation) is in acquiring deep convictions and loyalties that are worthy to sway his spirit. Surely it is ignoble to wave the grandeur of the opportunity aside and dodge the exercise of the mind?

* * *

'It doesn't matter what you fought for if you fought well.' The opposite would be more nearly true—that no matter how ill you fought, it will be well with you if you are found on the right side. Anyhow, it must obviously matter most crucially in the end for whom and against whom you have been ranged.

Another popular bromide in much request is, 'If I do my best, I suppose it will be all right.' Need it be so, in the affair of the immortal soul, any more than in business, or catching a train, or passing an examination? Much depends on whether one's best is good enough, or is any good at all. In all spheres, some 'bests' fare badly. Of course there *is* a sense in which a

man's real strenuous best will be accepted in the Infinite account, but most of those who are fond of this amazing dogma have used it as a drug against all further inquiry and effort.

* * *

'Superstition' is also a missile that could do with a rest. Its proper meaning is: silly consulting of crystals, tea-leaves, stars, and the moon—whether for Derby winners or the future; or a foolish dependence on charms as if the God of our destiny worked by such squalid means. Yet it is sometimes that type of person, covered all over with mascots and fetiches as it were, who describe as superstitious their mental superiors who base their lives upon the Unseen, and the Divine competence to act freely in and over nature.

* * *

'I'm religious, but I've got no theology.' In other words, such a one would believe in matter but not in mechanics: in chemicals but not in chemistry, in stars but not in astronomy! Such degenerate easy religiosity is a mental liability, not an asset, a mere state of the nerves without the fine austerities of theological knowledge to shape and control it. Which brings us to another taboo word, *dogma*,

and that reducing complaint dogmaphobia or brain-shyness, with its strange craving after the ghost of belief after the body has been discarded. The call for thin gruel usually comes from the infirm. It is allied to the cheerful imbecile movement for the 'freeing' of art from shape, technique, and proportion; of music from tonality; of literature from high personal reserves or indeed grammar; and of society from tradition, manners, and law in favour of 'simple' fraternity and 'natural' justice.

A few moments' thought shows that the Gospel, or good news, consists *precisely in its statements* about the identity of a Person and therefore the significance of what he did. Christianity's facts and promises *are* its whole point. Its events and definite declarations are alone what thrill hearts and move men's wills. Life disembodied ceases to function on our plane: a mind discarnate cannot act among men: thought is helpless without its appropriate forms: beauty cannot be had without shape and measure. The Law everywhere, for everyone, is that you can never divorce the meaning from the statement, the spirit from the form and matter.

It is human but a blunder to want the nourishment without the medium which yields

it, to evade mastication, to expect to buy things (including knowledge and religion) ready chewed. It cannot be done. And even to oblige democracy or people in a hurry, you can't give them Feeling without facts and assertions, and call the result religion.

You have to take Dogma—which means definite assertions. If you say 'God exists,' *that* is dogma. If you say he is good, there is more *dogma*. If you assert that he will overlook this or that failing—that is a stupendous dogma; and the man in the street has already, off his own bat, committed himself to some tremendous Doctrine! The fact is, those who object to it are particularly prone to it; it fills their conversation. But their authority for it is either hearsay or private wish, rather than the funded intelligence of an august line of philosophers, saints, and mystics.

It is indeed impossible to think on the unseen realities *or anything else* without the firm footing of Statement and Propositions. And as in architecture, so in Christianity, the thing *is* the Form and Formulæ. The beauty and inspiration consist entirely in the beliefs of Credal articles (1) that God cares; (2) that he has appeared in his own world; (3) that man is spiritual as well as physical; (4) that he has innate affinities with eternity and eternal life.

It is these that thrill and console—and they are dogmas, every one.

Practically all Christianity is in them! All of it is there, as the whole oak is wrapped in the acorn; the oak is only the logical evolution of the acorn.

Intelligence loves and contemplates doctrine, then, as its proper food and material. It must have it. In the absence of it, intellect at once gets busy to supply it. Without it, there would be a vacuum—or worse than that, a dim gaseous sentimentality in which all would evaporate, an inner ghostly fog of unintelligible moods, an emotional mush which self-respect could not put up with. The finer the intelligence, the more richly stored a mind is—the more Dogma it has.

* * *

'*Revelation.*' Frankly, one wonders why some people should give a conventional shudder when this word is uttered. Why should men jib at any term which merely indicates a certain care for us on the part of the Eternal Mind? They really *are* too easily shocked. What is a more normal and regular feature of all conscious life than revelation? Here and now 'revelation' is the continual hourly bond of union between man and man, between the more

intelligent and the less, between the civilised and the less so, between the expert and the tyro, between the parent and the child, between the poet-seer and the average mentality!

There is no living together without revelation, and there is obviously no 'religion without revelation.' In a small human fashion, *I* am giving you a revelation at this moment, through this page. If I chose to be silent, you would not be able to know my inmost thoughts. Only by a free, voluntary disclosure can you hope to know mine, or I yours.

A God unable to reveal himself as mind to mind is no 'living God'; is not even, properly, a mind at all. And if he *could*, but *did not*, convey his counsels, he would not be good; not moral, not worthy of interest or love. This plain ethical fact at once puts out of court (for man) the idea of any deity who is *not in relations with* the creature he has caused to exist. Such an 'absolute' is the dreary, abstract dream of an airless study.

* * *

The very word '*supernatural*' (once more) seems to throw some writers into a flurry which, examined, is more psychological than logical. Yet it is surely a fact that the plant in the hedge-row is *super-natural* to the stone at its roots.

The plant lives in another system, obeys not only physico-chemical laws like the stone, but other laws about which the stone could never dream—supposing it were endowed with a stone-consciousness for a moment. But the horse that comes to nibble the plant would be *super-natural* to the plant if the plant could be aware of its visitor. Next, the man crossing the field to lead the horse out has a soul-life, 'the mind that wanders through eternity,' and a whole range of correspondences which to the horse are again *super-natural*, beyond its reach. And man is in the like case, toward the tracts of spiritual Being above him and environing him (unless he has intimations vouchsafed him). The horse, the savage, the child, are utterly dependent (each in its way) upon you and me for any knowledge of your purpose or mind. They have to be *told*. It is a continuous Revelation and communication, by personal nearness, image, suggestion, information, and influence.

It is a Law of Nature—universal in its applicability—that the lower and more finite nature *cannot* know the higher and wiser and wider, except in the degree in which the latter *deigns to convey* the knowledge, deliberately. This Law has been expressed with unrivalled force by a profound psychologist thus: 'What

knoweth the things (interests and values) of a man save the spirit that is in man? *Even so*, no man knoweth the things of God, but the Spirit of God, . . . who searcheth the deep things of God.'

* * *

'*I can worship God better by myself than with others.*'

This, again, is simply not true. Those who say it no doubt feel that it *sounds* true, and many more (for various reasons) would like it to pass for true. But the fact is that society and social organisation is the normal condition of our religious life, as it is of the moral and rational. The wider and longer one's observation, the more does one agree with the conclusion:

'The idea that if a man gives up going to church, he will at once become a rationalist like J. S. Mill or a mystical genius like Spinoza is a delusion. In nine cases out of ten, he merely falls a victim to the first form of superstition that comes along, frequently of the crudest and most atavistic kind. And the notion that if we give up all religious authority, we shall get religious truth, is as reasonable as to hope for scientific truth by abolishing all the laboratories. It is only a form of the modern

democratic superstition that everybody is equally qualified to pronounce upon every subject under the sun; that religion is a subject of which people have exhausted the intellectual content as soon as they have left the elementary school. There is no doubt that a great deal of modern scepticism and irreligion is both shallow and irrational. The saying of Renan's was a wise one, that very few people have earned the right to disbelieve in Christianity. They have not the knowledge or insight to understand it, still less to criticise it.' (Hardwick, *Institutional Religion*, 1930, Benn.)

* * *

'*I can do without intermediaries, symbols, and sacraments.*'

Language itself, and all symbols, are absolutely necessary to mankind to mediate between Truth and the soul.

Why, you don't get *life itself* direct from God. It comes via your parents. Your body is an indirect, 'humanly-made' gift. Your ideas and culture came from those whom God set over you. You are at the mercy of physical circumstances, for what schooling and training you have had!

Your very idea of God depends absolutely on the age you were born in, the teachers who

have been sent you, the books that have been put into your hands. All knowledge is derived through others — through tradition, codes, systems, and the funded wisdom of poets, prophets, priests, and sages.

Wise men soon give up the attempt at starting all over again, for themselves, rejecting the handed-down religious and other insight of the ages and the corpus of knowledge possessed by the Church. In their spiritual life most of all, men are *social*, dependent 'members of one another.' The isolated existence is here impossible, or is very soon in difficulties. Thus your only choice comes down to this, quite early: Which is going to be your authority? Where are you going for your food and learning? *That* is your principal free and original act.

* * *

'*I can't think that absolute truth has been revealed.*'

How often has one heard this an an objection. But the answer is in the revelation itself. Certainly not *all* truth has been disclosed; we are expressly told so, and in any case know it by reasoning. On the other hand, vital portions of absolute truth *have* been communicated. And truth, because it *is* truth, cannot

conflict with other truth not disclosed, nor be cancelled out by it.

We believe what has been vouchsafed to us, as reasonable beings, because it has come upon the deliberate initiative of the Absolute Being, who 'cannot deceive nor be deceived.' The very same motives which impel us to give credence and welcome to what *has* been given us, lead us also to be content that such knowledge as is withheld has been withheld for an equally good purpose.

This is the clear answer to those who, rather carelessly or loosely, speak of absolute truth being not revealed. What they mean is the *entire* truth is not revealed; and this, our Lord and S. Peter and S. Paul asserted long before they did. They are confusing adequate practical knowledge with a demand for an impossible human omniscience.

So when a few religious-minded moderns argue that we 'weren't meant' to have a reliable, guaranteed revelatory religion, but have to work it out as part of our probation, most of them are quite unsuspicious of the above clear distinction. Why, of course *some* tracts of our theology have to be wrought out, in Councils and study. But it would have been a chasing of bogles and marsh-lights indeed if there were not an irreducible residuum of Truth

given, divine, *de fide*. A religion yoked incessantly to a succession of working hypotheses, with no certainty, no *punctum stans*, no continuing vertebra, is a thing that can lose its identity time after time in the course of change—in other words, is no entity at all. First the crowd and then the students will decline to be tantalised by these cloud-shapes and weather-charts of belief, with the prospect of nothing else *ad infinitum*.

Change and development, yes, by all means—as much as free ranging intellect needs. But with limits—limits of which the intellect itself is the first to see the need. What limits? The frontier between the stable and the instable will have to be very like *the same frontier in human personality;* that personality remains recognisably one and the same, along with growth and modifications of method and mood. A period when the inexpert willingly listen to the wise and the trained and authoritative is safe. Safe also is the period, still distant, when 'all have come to the knowledge of truth.' But the stages in between, which is where we are, can be terrible in mental muddle and spiritual mortality.

As Joad said—speaking as a non-Christian too—'a creed in "harmony with the thought of to-day" will be out of harmony with that

of to-morrow. And a religion based on the discoveries of modern science will be discredited by the discoveries of a science still more modern.' That is why the cobbling of the faith attempted so oddly by gentlemen in orders is so unedifying a popular spectacle. It is due to an itch to feel up-to-date, in some cases.

Mr. A disapproves of miracles (at present) as something untidy, because 'efficiency' is up-to-date. Mr. B interprets the Incarnation in terms of Will, because since Bergson, the philosophy of will is up-to-date. Mr. C evaluates the experience of the saints by the method of the behaviourist psychology, because that method was up-to-date—when he wrote his book. Mr. D interprets the Atonement in humanitarian terms, because humanitarianism was up-to-date at the moment, or looks so. So it goes on. It is a singular blend of nervousness and the desire to appear in the van. But the van is not a trustworthy place to be in; it gets stuck, and if you keep each van under observation you will see the crew constantly have to leave the derelict!

Distracted people sometimes give way to cries like this: '*What we want is re-statement.*' Do they know always what they mean by the word? You can so re-state a truth that it becomes something different, and not the truth. Or

you can so re-state it as to keep it the same, but clearer to your contemporaries. Presumably some of them mean the latter : then why not say so ? Others however would prefer the former kind of ' re-statement ' without being candid about it ; and the word they ought honestly to use is re-shaping and revisal. A theology which needs restatement once a century (said Fr. Knox once) will be a very puzzling affair. Words are symbols of the exchange of human thought. To be continually restating your theology is like continually crossing over a frontier and having to get your money changed every time. ' This is not only confusing but alarming, for the plain man naturally wants to make sure he has got value for his money, and he is a little inclined to suspect that his theological symbols will have suffered some depreciation in the changing, just as his honest sovereigns do at Calais.'

Each recast article brings him up with two distinct jerks. (1) Is this new statement one that I can believe, and (2) is it really the *equivalent* of the traditional dogma it professes to enshrine, or is there some unconscious thimble-rigging ? No. Restatement is a ticklish, highly difficult, and risky process. It needs enormous wisdom, unanimity and authority to effect it ; and it calls for almost equal delicacy

and accuracy of perception in those who are to receive it! 'Tell us what you want us to believe, and we will see about it.' That, he thinks, is the modern demand, and it is not to be met by dissolving views.

* * *

Again, '*Casuistry*.' What an *abracadabra* of a word that is. Macaulay's schoolboy, and any dictionary, will tell you that society could not proceed a day without it; for it means 'the science of cases,' the considering of a thing on its merits. Just that.

The man-in-the-street is perpetually calling out for *more* casuistry every time he asks the preacher to 'come off his perch' and give us applications and concrete suggestions instead of 'highfalutin' general principles. He quite rightly wants hard cases considered on their respective merits—*good casuistry*, in short. Judges on the Bench chiefly need this casuistical common sense. Managers of great works are all the better for it; they call it by its other names of horse-sense, or knowledge of human nature. It is that very necessary function of tempering the wind of justice to the shorn lamb, the suffering individual.

What most people of course mean when they stiffen and say 'casuistry' is something quite

different, namely 'sophism.' Very well; they should *say* so, and not bring a noble spiritual science into disrepute. Without this applied mercy, this insight into cases, this making of allowances, no priest could get along a single week with the sinners, who have as much right to the Church's attention as the saints. He would drive away precisely those for whom his Master cared. That is what the woodenly 'righteous' gentry do in effect. They lack pity and imagination: they are dull to nuances.

* * *

The fetish of '*frankness*' again. Hear a scientist on the subject: 'Because science is frank, it will not do to convert the proposition simply, and argue that frankness is scientific. Any treatment of sex, for instance, that gets down to fundamentals should surely insist on its biological function, marriage and parenthood; and has no business to treat it, hedonist fashion, as an end in itself.

'It seems rather to be taken for granted that if youth wants something, it must have it, regardless of its consequences. If the child asks for fireworks, let it enjoy the satisfaction of blowing itself up. Now quite a lot of people would like to blow up civilisation for various reasons, and sex is an explosive always ready to hand.

'Yet men and women, one would suppose, must keep cool if they are going to co-operate closely in the work of the world; for dalliance spells waste of time at the very least, and, if anything is sure about the course of human evolution, it is that wasters—whether of time or of their own substance—are destined to go under.' (R. R. Marett, the noted anthropologist, in *The Observer*, February 2.)

* * *

Another vice to which some even of the thoughtful are prone is Divorce (I do not mean marital rupture; I mean the dividing of things whose whole point is union with the next thing).

Thus you get misguided partisans of authority *v.* inspiration; when either, apart, is useless. Or you get the false antithesis between art and life, which are meant to be mutually helpful. The error knows no bounds; it extends to vain wrangling about the sexes, neither of which could exist without the other! Whole literatures, worthless enough, are built on these bogus questions.

'Spirit' and 'matter' (both abstractions, which nobody has practically experienced apart) find their champions the one against the other. It is like some episode out of *Alice in Wonderland*.

No wonder that we produce politicians and economists, therefore, who can divorce man from the soil, the employed from the employer, value from wage, religion from education, capital from labour. No wonder we produce novelists and play-writers who divorce love from marriage, and give us marriage without love: or artists who specialise in 'inspiration' without form, and others who swear by form without inspiration. And in the din, the man who murmurs that good things are best when seen in union is hardly heeded. Yet goodness, morality, life—are a blend and an equilibrium: while good things, torn from their complements, may become a scourge. What God has put together, let us not put asunder.

That plea is addressed equally to the rhetorical would-be 'pagans,' to well-intentioned religious people, to scientists and empiricists, to system-makers and all others whom it may concern. A *Times* leading article recently urged that our present menaces are 'thought without religion and religion without thought.' This divorce produces desiccated men, the knowledge of one of whom is not negotiable at the other's bank. Each should have in him something of the other.

Were this so, we should not hear the type of observation to which I now come: 'The

scientists aren't unanimous about questions of belief.' The answer is clear. Outside his particular branch of inquiry, a student's opinion is worth no more than that of his neighbour in the same row of villas. It may be worth rather less than the opinion of a man in the next street, trained in logic and philosophy or in weighing evidence, albeit not a specialist in a concrete science. Credulity notwithstanding, really there is no magic by which the religious hypothesis of a man expert in electrons and molecules achieves greater validity than the hypothesis of a man expert in philosophy or theology,—of a man intelligently studious of ethics or psychology,—or of one trained in aesthetics or law.

Any *excessive* veneration of the individual scientist cannot survive half a dozen contacts at the dinner table or a country-house week-end. Assuredly their general intelligence is no *less* than that of the judges, barristers, financiers, artists, doctors, novelists, and actors who make up the rest of the party. But not necessarily *higher*. Off their very defined track, they are as much to seek as the rest of us. Like the other guests, they are taken by surprise at glimpses into the other guests' minds, beliefs, callings, crafts, and lives.

Nay, so specialised must research to-day be,

that the physicist whose name is mentioned at Harvard, Oxford, the Sorbonne, or Bombay with awe may be a perfect noodle in psychology and not much better at biology. And the biochemist, the deeper he is now involved in his own experiments, has the less time for morphology. The astro-physicist and the botanist, though both of European fame, may have hardly any scientific knowledge in common! ' Science ' (which merely means factual ' knowledge,' neither more nor less) is vast and intricately divided into compartments such as individual men or small groups can conveniently tackle.

Now the majority of such highly differentiated researchers stick to their last. Indeed a new spirit has come over scientists in the last twenty years. They are so in love with their work—whether it be experimentation in plant life, shell-fish culture, electricity, sexual mutation among frogs, mechanics and what not—that they do not dogmatise outside of it. Modesty forbids: so does care for their reputation. Many of them frankly are not interested enough in the arts, the other sciences, in philosophy or theology to trespass in those domains: though numbers of them again are found to be wise learners. A bishop talking physics is not more at sea usually

than a physicist or an anatomist (as such) discussing the Immaculate Conception, which he may confuse with the Virgin Birth—or even (this has happened) with the Incarnation!

* * *

Now as to our Politics.

We look for the school of Returning Sanity, an age of Rediscovery, when men can frankly look again at the great systems and organisations of the past without any parvenu feeling of inferiority or nervous self-assertion. Sociologists will calmly appraise and borrow what is still practicable from Augustine's ideas of the City of God, from the ideal but partly realised conceptions of the middle ages, from the fine principles and applications of Thomas Aquinas, from Thomas More and others. Indeed all this *has begun.* Contemporary English and American writers on social affairs are increasingly aware that something more than the candlelight of *laissez faire*, acquisitiveness, and religious individualism is needed to illuminate our social dusk. Economics come under social science, and that under *moral* relations. And those again get all their vitality and point from *religion;* since, as Newman profoundly said, 'apprehension of the Unseen is the only known principle capable of subduing moral evil,

educating the multitude, and organising society.' Much the clearest and most coherent sociological thinking of the day is now being done by social guilds and circles that study under religious auspices or with the religious idea presiding. Outside these (except of course men like Tawney, Keynes, Cole, and others who respect the classic achievements of the past) the political parties often sprawl amid momentary expediency and rule-of-thumb, mere improvisers from day to day.

This is a costly process—in trade, in economics, in law, and in other ways. For thought-saving is not labour-saving. But a growing handful of clear-headed people are bringing society to the test of ideas, principles and goals. The brilliantly equipped Catholic Social Guild recently stated: 'The English mind tends to work inductively rather than deductively. The immense mass of practical and devoted social work that exists in this country, and the astonishing *chaos of social doctrines* on which all these are supposed to be founded, result in a good deal of wasted effort and not a little that is mischievous. Much time and energy and wealth and suffering might have been saved if only the system under which we live, and the efforts to cure its defects, had grown in a less haphazard fashion. Far too many remain in a

state of blank and bland ignorance as to the existence of principles that should guide their daily actions.' And as Mr. Wells says: 'The idea, for instance, of cornering a drug, a food, or a necessity struck my mind then as a sort of irresponsible monkey trick that no one would ever be permitted to do in reality. . . . Of course the naive intelligence of a boy does not grasp the subtler developments of human inadequacy. He begins life with a disposition to believe in the wisdom of grown-up people, he does not realise how casual and disingenuous has been the development of law and custom, and he thinks that somewhere in the state there is a power as irresistible as a headmaster's to check mischievous and foolish enterprises of every sort.'

But now suppose we got this efficiency. It might prove no better than muddle-through—if it be not based on psychological truth, on man's *moral* nature, on God. If spiritual imponderables are left out of the reckoning, down would come the house of cards (and card-indexes).

So democracy (or any other 'ocracy) is not a mere power, but a responsibility. Governments and states are not 'sovereign': only Truth is that. Votes don't alter that.

We have some useful critics of social disorder, like Mr. Shaw and Mr. Wells, but even they

do not take in all the factors : they tend to disregard the wider environment of man's spirit.

* * *

'The modern mind.' Which ? As a modern myself, I know at least a dozen, all different, among which it is not easy to find a common identifying note. Not one of them is entitled to rule out the rest from the problematic honour of calling itself 'modern.' This contradiction of mentality is conveniently ignored. Every age is 'modern' to itself. And the modernness of 1930 is not modern to 1940. Let us be *really* emancipated for a change, and not heed what 'everyone is saying' but as far as possible what is permanently true.

We should try to discount the newspaper fable that our 'modern' thought is radically different from that of other generations. There has always been a 'modern' thought, even in pre-Christian ages ; and in the Middle Ages as at the Sicilian court of Frederick II—a fashionable preference for one or other of the alternatives to the received faith. Men imagine *our* critics are particularly hostile—because people are mostly acquainted only with those critics. A dose of history undeceives us. Job was a great asker of questions : and even he

did not invent agnosticism or the inquiring, critical attitude.

'Post-War youth' is not really different from the youth of the Trojan, Anglo-Saxon or Parliamentary war periods. They look the same, are born the same way, they teeth and grow alike, sustain life by the same methods of eating, drinking, sleeping. They sport and make love as of old. They imbibe knowledge through the senses, store it in brains of the same weight and shape. Their souls are of like substance with the consciousness of all who've ever lived, and those souls will be saved or lost in the same ways.

* * *

'I've an absolutely open mind—like science.' The irony is that science's one aim is *not* the 'open' mind (which too often is open at both ends, and holds nothing), but its aim is to establish certainties—every one of which, as soon as really attained, *closes* the mind to doubts or wonder on *that* point. Progress consists in lessening the area of guess-work, speculation, and uncertainty; in adding truths, not question-marks; in closing open questions, not in opening settled ones. True, each finding is a starting point for fresh inquiries, but that is another matter altogether. Science is precisely

*war on* 'agnosticism' in its sphere, by its very nature and method. And those people who feel that the less we know (say, theologically) the greater our mental freedom, are anti-scientific: they are Rip van Winkles who have forgotten that *knowledge* is power and freedom, and the blank or open mind is in its degree weakness and fumbling.

So it is a vain fear that every definition leaves less room for free thought: what it leaves less room for is licensed day-dreaming—a very different thing, with which it is too often confused. No: every point cleared up, every new coherent formula or doctrine, *adds* to the pabulum for thought; it is an extra bit of territory to walk on; is new stuff to bite on, and adds to the fulness and spaciousness of our mental world. The man with a large body of science or theology doesn't think less, or less freely, than the man without: he thinks more, more freely, and more effectively. Strong minds don't want to graze on the air; they demand form, content, distinction, category, richness. It is with *weights* that the best drill is done, not with feathers or with nothing. 'Give me something craggy I can break my mind on,' is their demand. It is not first-class minds that are complacent amid vagueness. They will not jettison hard-won principle or fact

in obedience to a fashionable cry to 'go back' to simplicity, scepticism, or the open mind: that is asking the world to return to the nebulæ, the man to go back to protoplasm.

* * *

'Away with all these taboos——.' Our Hotspurs often exclaim thus, and some taboos admittedly are not as valid or intelligent as others. But each case has to be taken on its merits: there are no automatic rules for loose thinkers. Young levellers won't get much encouragement from the men they are fond of quoting. Bertrand Russell told a young admirer the other day that the marriage tie must remain (much to her surprise); Shaw is disgusted with the yammering about 'sex appeal'; Wells wrote recently that divorce is hateful and should not be anything but a last resort of failures; and here is Havelock Ellis: 'If I have done my best to destroy some taboos, I have not only a firm faith in taboos but I regard them as absolutely an indestructible element of social life and not of human life alone. A taboo simply indicates something that is "not done." The reason may be unknown, so unreasonable reasons are invented to explain it. But below the surface there always are reasons for taboos.'

So, before the 'clean sweep' supervenes, it is useful just to look again for the ancestral wisdom a custom or reticence may have. 'It is only taboos which enable us to possess any sacredness of personality at all,' says Ellis. 'The individual in whom the taboos necessary are not automatic or self-imposed is an anti-social individual, and his elimination would be for our benefit.'

Pretty strong, that. 'Life is always a discipline,' he concludes. It is what the masters of the spirit have always said. 'Freedom' is not freedom to indulge any desire; it is freedom from the solicitations of bad desires. It may even mean an economy in the good ones! As Nietzsche said, echoing Christian insight, it is not by finding release in merely instinctive or sensuous life that the spirit of man finds its growth; but by cutting into life. 'Spirit is that life which itself cutteth into life; by one's own pain one's own knowledge increaseth.' Without obedience, selection and discipline, he said, there is no spiritual nobility, only smudge and smear.

* * *

'It's better to be moral without hope of reward or deterrent motive of punishment.' More plausibility here. We will let that acute

intellect, Walter Bagehot, quietly deflate it thus: 'The belief in a moral state hereafter (dependent for its nature on our goodness or our wickedness) does not annihilate the sense of the *inherent* nature of good or evil—because it is *itself the result of* that sense! Our only ground for accepting an ethical and retributive religion *is* the inward consciousness that virtue being virtue must prosper, that vice being vice must fail. So religion cannot possibly swallow up morality; because it is dependent, for origin and continuance, *on* that moral sense.'

Exactly. In other words, it is when men's faith in the ultimate validity of right and wrong is weakening that they suggest the silent jettisoning of the belief in an eternal destiny.

* * *

An M.P.—and a lawyer—said to me: 'If only there had been a revelation in huge plain letters in the sky, I could believe; so could millions more.' I asked him in what language the sign should be, English, Latin, or Esperanto; (2) what would be *its* sign of genuineness; (3) whether pyrotechnics which bully and coerce sense-belief are not anti-spiritual and the death of personal moral faith; (4) whether the evidences we have are not immensely more to the point already—in nature, in history, in

ethics and metaphysic; all of which left the worthy legislator at a loss.

'The highest part of human belief is based upon certain developable instincts,' as Bagehot says. 'Take the instinct of beauty. Ingenious thinkers who delight in difficulties have rejoiced to point out that a barbarian thinks one thing charming, the Greek another. Modern nations have a standard different from the ancient. The taste of the vulgar is one thing, the taste of the refined another. The mass of men prefer a gaudy daub to the cartoons of Raphael. What certainty (the sceptic triumphantly asks) can there be in matters (of beauty or morality) on which people have so differed? But these recondite doubts impose on no one. The nature of this instinct (when it deals with beauty, morality, or religion) differs altogether from that of those axioms that are borne in on all, like "two straight lines cannot enclose a space" or two and two make four. But half mankind would reject the idea that the cartoons were in any sense admirable. The characteristic of this instinct is not that it is *irresistible*, but that it is *developable*. The appeal is not to the many as with Euclid, but to those few, the exceptional few, at whom the many scoff. So in the yet higher instincts of morality and religion. The evidence of the few—the small,

high-minded minority, who are the exception of ages, the salt of the earth—outweighs the evidence of countless myriads who live as their fathers lived.'

'Yes, but even a fine and good mind may vary from mood to mood.' It is no surprise to find them *human* surely? And (to continue the brilliant thinker above quoted): 'No sound mind permits itself to be permanently disturbed by these variations in its own state. We have a *criterion* faculty within us, which tells us which are lower moods and which are higher.'

* * *

'I'm afraid I see both sides of a question too clearly to be able to take a side,' some genuinely thoughtful men tell me. Good: but don't let it play 'Hamlet' with you. The ability to see round a subject is no reason for not espousing a party, a cause, or a church: it is actually a strong reason for doing so, for every family and society of men is in need of those who can see over the wall and parley with others. It is possible to take a 'side' without taking a bludgeon. Men work most fruitfully in groups, as the political genius of Burke saw. Except in rare cases, free-lances are infertile, and always so until groups co-opt their ideas. To stand aloof, or to invent a *via media* of your

own, may miss the truth and the reward altogether; for the truth does not always lie 'between' two things, but possibly (1) in both, (2) above both, (3) in their union, or (4) in one of them. Fellowship and action are often better helps to truth than isolation and scepticism.

* * *

'Religion began in magic——' Unlikely. Rather in speculation and wonder, divinely actuated of course as man's life and mind are. A boomerang argument too: for awkwardly enough science, medicine, letters, arts, and all had equally rude starts! It does not matter, for they are now something *else*, studied on their own merits.

* * *

So one might go on treating the parrot disease; yet never catch up. For tabloid thinking is a symptom only. The 'miracle' prejudice is dealt with on page 194 in its place.

# XI

## 'THE OBVIOUS PURPOSE OF LIFE'

'The world is a vale of soul-making.'—KEATS.

'The obvious purpose of life is growth.'—O. C. ELLIS, M.Sc., Ph.D.

'If personalities exist transcending the body, they crown life's progress.'—JULIAN HUXLEY.

THERE would be less tedium and more Te Deum in the lives of most men if they felt through it the thread of a purpose over and above the scurrying to and fro of their own little ant-like lives.

Those lives too are so piteously short. Man's 'tiny spark-like consciouness,' viewed by itself on the mundane level, takes so little in. True, our romantics from time to time whistle to keep up their courage, or beat the big drum about some earthly future which is a fanciful substitute for the revealed kingdom of heaven. But it does not convince themselves for long; its coming is profoundly doubted by many of them; at best it could arrive only with the slowness of geological change, by which time

mankind's lease on this terrestrial platform will be up.

Meanwhile all values centre in the individual, and reason wants to know the destiny of the individual. It will have to launch out into Vastness soon. Whether it will be 'all at sea' and 'lost'—without the needed faculties—depends on ourselves. Ignorance here is a very grim handicap.

A thoughtful scientist, quoted above, a little while ago put it this way: 'Long experience has taught me that in scientific research the obvious answer is most likely to be true: and the obvious purpose of life is growth. Four stages of this growth we call science, and the fifth, religion. . . . Of the infinite mechanical energy there is no doubt, but it is no attribute of mechanical force to have purpose. He of the Purpose was and is emotional, intellectual, spiritual; and this, infinitely.

'The first thing to grow was matter, and it grew from the energy or mechanical force which is one aspect of him. How it was done we have no conception; and yet we know that when one schoolboy drops a pen-nib in a suitable acid, and another rubs a fountain-pen on his sleeve, the only difference between the hydrogen of one and the electric charges produced by the other is one of arrangement; for the hydrogen

atom is the simplest of all forms of matter—a little world of "positive" electricity round which revolves a little moon of "negative" electricity. We can destroy it, but we cannot make it again. Wherever science finds it possible to imitate evolution, it is always at an intermediate point, never at a crux. I can produce the helium nucleus, but cannot set its moons about it. . . . About the initial germination hangs a veil.

'Then came a second phase of Growth—the planets. Incidentally, the solar system, as Eddington points out, is unique in the universe; and in the solar system itself there is no other earth like ours. Illogical, to be pleased on this account! It makes him of the purpose no greater: not greater, but nearer.

'The third stage of the evolution was the coming of Life. One can play with life, interfere with the segmented frog-spawn so that four quarter-sized frogs hatch out in place of one normally sized; but one cannot *make* a frog. This is the fourth phase of evolution or growth. (Tracing the marvels of symbiosis and the coming of larger individual complex organisms, he proceeds): It is the adventurous who climb the scale. The animals who held tight to the floor of the ocean developed into sponges, corals and anemones; but the adventurous

developed fin and back-bone, and at last became the fish. The adventurers were the ancestors of Man. Truly the spirit of God brooded on the face of the waters.

'What is more important than our particular form is this: whence came that spirit of Adventure which measures fresh heights only to devise fresh means to surmount them? Was it a further operation of the brooding gardener?

'I conceive the fifth and final stage of evolution or growth to be the evolution, from Man, of beings like his Creator. *I believe this to be the goal of the growth which is the purpose of life: I believe that Christ came to explain that goal.* His coming may have been an outcome of the conditions of the time, but I find that hard to believe, because (like Mary of old) I believe him to be the Gardener.

'It was the crux of this fifth phase of Growth. It was the coming of the first atom of matter, of the star, of the first moneron, of the first land-animal, that was important. Of this crucial factor in our approach to God, the coming of Christ, the great point is that he came. "In my father's house are many stages," he said; and the Greek for stage, mansion, or halting-place, is Mone—(but he could not tell them about the moneron!) He talked to them

constantly, however, about *growth*. Even when the parable was about money the money was to grow; the great sin was not to grow. When they were ready, he gave an explanation: The Kingdom of heaven is like leaven.

'Another basic idea which it was vital to communicate was that of breaking with the past. In this sense he came to bring a sword—not to cut the threads of evolution and fulfilment but to prevent petrifaction and stagnation. On Akbar's Bridge at Futehpur is an inscription: "Jesus, on whom be peace, said: This world is a bridge; build no house on it." . . .

'It was not so much a great release as a new responsibility. He never said his yoke was easy: he said it was kindly, good-natured, propitious. And it is not easy; it is a perpetual strife: the point is, it is a joyous strife.

'It is better not to exist than to spoil the upward evolution of oneself or another. . . .

'Then what of worship? We worship God because of what his Incarnation demonstrated him to be—the ultimate poetry, the final horizon of science, the mystery which we cannot appreciate without Christ—for no man cometh to the Father but by him . . . it is the natural homage of the intelligent lover of beauty, made humbly confident and assured by the transcendent supremacy and condescending

comradeship of the unspeakable Craftsman of time and space.'

An admirable confession of faith from a modern man of Science, who moreover can think cogently.

Are we sponges and corals and dead-ends ; or are we adventurers moving on and up ? *Are we denying our souls the right to a further evolution ?*

Many men candidly do not know. And Joad's comment is :

' Religion, as I have defined it, can rescue us from the modern impasse. Intimating that *the meaning of this world must be sought outside of it*, it bestows, nevertheless, a meaning upon the world. Assuring us that our highest faculties and noblest inspirations have their origin in a world which is not known to the senses, it invests them with significance. They are to be interpreted, it tells us, as premonitions of the goal of life's pilgrimage, yet tells us also that it is only through our efforts that life can go forward to that goal. Hence it offers us a commission in the army of life, bidding us keep our energies fresh, our appetites keen, our faculties at cutting edge in its service.'

I heard the eminent astro-physicist, Sir James Jeans, the other day point out the

importance and fascination of man's future—moral, mental, and social. Modern science, he said, gives but little support to the materialist and non-spiritual theories which many of the would-be up-to-date people in the last century held. 'When we come to the atom or to the cosmos as a whole, the mechanical interpretations fail. We come to entities and phenomena which are in no sense mechanical. The Whole seemed nearer to a great Thought than to a great machine—conscious as I am that the pendulum of thought may yet swing more than once in the future. May we assert that the universe is a Thought, that the nebulæ, stars, and phenomena and ourselves are the creation of a Universal Mind underlying and co-ordinating all? As a speculation, yes; we may; though not yet as an ascertained physical *scientific* fact. Science indeed seems at present to be moving in this direction. I find almost any system of philosophy preferable to the materialistic ones held two generations ago.'

My reader perhaps heeds what the leading scientists say, and (if he be as subtle and intelligent as I suppose him to be) he will take this last utterance of a representative ultra-modern scientist (speaking on the eve of March, 1930, to the world through the ether) as a

cordial permit to reasoned Faith to go onward and upward, to use its antennæ to seek.

And now hear Julian Huxley :

'To an individuality that can transcend the limits of its material substance (by tools, machines, inventions, language, letters, thoughts, and symbols) the name of personality is given. There may be personalities which have not merely transcended substance but are rid of it altogether : in all ages the theologian and the mystic have told of such "disembodied spirits" postulated by the one, felt by the other. "If such actually exist, they crown life's progress."[1]

'To prevent life's extinction, to ennoble it, to people earth and sea and sky with it,' said Professor Drummond ; 'this is the meaning of the struggle for life. And this is our life—to pursue the Type, Christ, to populate the world here and hereafter with it. This is what life is for. The Christian in his life-aim is in strict line with Nature. What men call the supernatural is also quite natural. Mark well also the splendour of this idea of salvation. It is not merely final safety. It is to be conformed to the Image of the Son. It is for these poor elements to attain the supreme beauty.'

[1] *The Individual in the Animal Kingdom.* Cambridge University Press.

*The Christian life is the only life that will ever be completed.* As the same thinker said, apart from Christ the life of mankind is a broken pillar. One by one in sight of Eternity all human ideals fall short; one by one before the open grave all human hopes dissolve. The poet sees a moment's faint light in nature's care for the type—*but that too goes.* The globe itself is doomed: the end of the planet is cold, and death, and silence.

> ' " So careful of the type? " but no,
> From scarped cliff and quarried stone
> She cries, " A thousand types are gone
> I care for nothing; all shall go." '

All? No. *One* type remains. 'Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the Image of his Son.' And 'when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.'

# XII

## THE OBSTACLE OF SEX CHATTER

> ' One tires of these novels that demonstrate the futility of modern life. They agree with anarchy, they consent to chaos. They are renegades from art, they are hostile to its spirit. They do not believe in their own material, which is life. Their object seems to be to discredit their medium.'—L. P. HARTLEY, *Saturday Review*

TO have read most of the novels that have made a stir in the post-War years, to have seen a large selection of plays and films ; to have gone through shelves of current discussion on sociology, ethics, and religion, and heard the popular reactions, is to see how ' disillusion ' or dissatisfaction waxes and wanes with the cult of sex. Naturally, for the interaction is close.

The greater living writers humorously or fastidiously stand aside from the vulgarity, regarding it as raw and callow. Kipling, Galsworthy, Bridges, Masefield, Belloc, Bennett, Barrie, Chesterton, Philpotts, Noyes, Birrell, have genius, tradition, and adult sanity behind them, and can therefore do without the cheap literary device of aphrodisiacs. Shaw, at least

a power for cleanliness, ironically lashes 'sex appeal'—the phrase and the thing—as ill-bred. It stands in the way of the higher mental enterprises.

Sex is only beautiful when part of a whole, a happy, and intelligently moral human being. It is the tearing it from its wholesome context that does the mischief. Keep it a sacred part of your integral human nature, which is also spiritual, ideal, social, chivalrous, and humorous. A huge increment of health, poise, and vigour would accrue if we realised the power of mind over matter, of the whole over a part—instead of meanly knuckling under saying Flesh is King. This one organic reaction has been insanely magnified, out of proportion—it has been 'talked up' egregiously, boomed, vulgarised, romanticised, scolded, cursed, over-analysed—everything except *kept in its true place*, like bathing, eating, laughing, or playing.

The age is scared of 'repression'; though even repression is healthier than promiscuity. But repression is not the Christian clue. Many interests, ideals, and balance, are the sovereign insurance against hysteria, triviality, and degeneracy. A life of zest and ardour is the pure life, as well as the happiest. A healthy *draught* is kept up through all the faculties, ventilating the whole man.

One instinct, taken out of focus, can be a monster rife with fatal results. It is *natural* for finer, evolving man to direct and sublimate his raw stuff of sensation. I recommend as the best short book recently on the subject, *Christianity and Sex*, by Professor Dawson (April 1930 : Faber & Faber, 1s. net). Cheap solutions, or indulgence or evasion of consequences, lead to wretchedness : 'there is a way that seems good to a man, but the end thereof is death,' said a Hebrew hygienist 3000 years ago. Enrich your life with fine and strenuous aims, and in a wonderful way you find that one-time irritants and solicitations have been transcended, transmuted, and added instead to the grace of life.

This may be the battle-ground on which the death or survival of the white races may be decided in the next fifty years. The able critic, G. A. Atkinson, speaks of 'the orgy of frenzied filth through which films are passing,' as 'an anti-Christian revel'; and none has more evidence than he. 'The general drift of the entire entertainment tends to the destruction of the sense of chivalry in men and the destruction of the moral sense in women.' 'Most men,' says J. C. Squire again, 'are incapable of discussing morals for lack of intelligence and knowledge, and can only be helped by being

told from above that things are thus and thus. . . . There is quite enough of the physical side of sex already if life is to contain anything better. The doctrine that every man may regard every woman as a possible object of siege would make social relations more self-conscious and uncomfortable, to say the least. . . . The field seems to be left almost entirely to the unorthodox, the shallow, the smart, the licentious, the under-sexed, and the anarchic dreamers. The hungry sheep look up and are not fed.'

It is a superstition that the sex affair is a necessary co-efficient of all lives—like the superstition that used to 'cup' and bleed patients, or cram them with victuals and port-wine when abstinence was the proper treatment. Even a zealot for birth-control in her latest book this year says: 'Undoubtedly chastity has a great moral and intellectual value. Sometimes I cannot help wondering whether sexual life is compatible with a life of brain-working.' On this matter the enormous wisdom of moral tradition is being vindicated in a hundred ways.

The Christian can afford to laugh at 'repressed complexes': the well-orientated life is not controlled by them. Man's spirit is set toward a freedom that involves self-conquest, and it will never be content to meet its difficulties by

avoiding them. I know many celibates who are living rich, keen and resonant lives: for man is an incredibly plastic and educable being, uniquely suggestible for good or the opposite. Granted the will, and some wisdom, he can wholly change his passional habits in a very short space of time. His feelings are indefinitely convertible, and his interests transferable. Therein lie his dignity and significance. He hears too little of this in a time which mistakes life for the poorer animal forms of it.

We live as we believe. Yes, but—we believe as we live. And it is no wonder that when we are involved in a set round of physiological habits, the mind insensibly tones and moulds its outlook to *approve* of them: it makes a creed to fit and justify them, without suspecting that it is doing so. Hence some at least of current non-belief is not logical but pathological, not psychical but physical, not mental but temperamental.

The worst of this physical appetite is that it is so 'de-personalising' to use Shaw's word. And here is Mr. Ivor Brown on the tendency in the theatre:—'So many dramatists of our time assume that the study of ethics is a whiskered affair properly relegated to the Victorian dust. From time to time I am invited to attend a play in which the wealthy, elegant, and masculine A

cannot make up his mind whether to live with the lady B or C or D. It is never suggested that the word " ought " has any relevance or that such out-moded concepts as affection, obligation or responsibility should be admitted to the story. What is supposed to excite us is simply the question of fact, i.e. with which charmer he will be resident after the two hours' traffic of the stage. In my opinion (I believe it to be a lonely one) there is rarely the slightest interest in the problem of what nonentity is living with which. After twenty minutes of these twitterings I could be heartily glad if they were all to fall dead in each other's arms. Accordingly it was a pleasant shock to meet a play which discussed the nature of sin instead of a play which paraded the usual set of chatterers who are not really " beyond good or evil " but simply as much below that state as the wombat, the weasel, and the slug.'

Men and women have only a certain finite quantum of attention : if it is given to *this*, it is subtracted from the higher interests. And there is also, as a result, less future gravitation to the higher : ask any mental expert, any neurologist or physiologist. Talk about an orientation or an appetite, and you infallibly strengthen it. And when strengthened, it demands more talk about it. So the rotary motion goes on. It is possible

to talk a weakness or an instinct into a fictitious importance; then it obtains mastery, finally dictatorship. In certain 'advanced' circles they know everything except the ground-plan of life. From them we get un-souled and clever books—books that are often one long typographical wink, an assault on human trust and ideals in thirty chapters. One critic in a noted review wrote:

'There have crept into these books an impatience with life and a tendency to look over its edge into vacuity. Mind and heart are beset by a distressing frivolity which cripples. His mental bewilderment is only a pretext for inactivity. He lets things slide until disease comes to rob him of the problems he had never tried to solve.'

As to those reverts who preach a curious 'life-worship' (by which is meant 'Do what you will,')—Life is not like that. Life loves pattern. The more life, the more self-control. Health, like virtue, does not protest too much: its pulse is quiet and steady. Youth is told not to suppress its evil impulses, or they will fester inside. *Fact* says, on the other hand: 'If you moderate an ugly or destructive impulse, it is carried off in the healthy blood-stream and thought-stream. And you are stronger, more a

man, for doing it. Sublimation pays both immediate and deferred dividend. Personal power and health are increased.'

Here is the shrewdest thing in the latest volume by C. E. Montague, vindicating the crucial importance of personal ethics :

'What a thrill we would get from any unconventional pioneer who let fashion go hang and said that conduct was three-fourths of life, that most of us spend the greater part of our time in thinking out what we ought to do in this or that case, and that literature is only losing the way and going off to dawdle in blind alleys when it ceases to take count of the fact!'

Let sex be discussed by all means; but by the trained expert, and in its place, subordinately to a score of richer interests; not only by erotically inclined men and women who are inexpert in biology or ethics, or indifferent to social reactions.

There is *not* a fixed sum of desire in man which must find an outlet somewhere. That is a curiously wooden notion. A man is a plastic being : release may degrade him, while control and other competing attractions send his thoughts into other and better channels.

The late D. H. Lawrence was a type of those who wear themselves out in trying to invent

new ideas about this matter. They only change the name of their prison. They look for fulfilment in a grotesquely false direction of which the terminus is death. That infinitely sad genius wailed: 'No inspiration can get man beyond his limits,'—begging the whole question (you notice) what *are* his limits! Healthy and wise minds in every age have seen that man *can* transcend the so-called limits: that is precisely his *purpose*. 'Man is a Bridge: he is something to be surpassed,' said Nietzsche truly, and he admired asceticism as a means. Man is only advanced in so far as he transcends his nature—in particular, the merely animal unconsciously sexual nature.

The beauty of man's life, as history knows, has depended on his ability to find a supernature, and enshrine it in worship, thought, code and art. Not to bear his spirit down into the dark blood and senses, as the confused amateurs fancy, but up into a place of held experience and supernatural wisdom where male and female are fulfilled and forgotten.

It is to the interests of Thought, as well as religion and the race, and especially of women, that women should be regarded simply—by dis-intoxicated minds—as 'female of man,' as a spiritual and moral creature like her brother, as fellow-pilgrim in time and eternity. All her

other aspects are merely secondary. The post-War mind needs disinfecting of puerile moods; and then, virile and realist once more, it can look at this half of the human race as what it is—mother, nurse, sister, worker, wage-earner, human being, personality, immortal soul, potential saint, blood-sister to Elizabeth Fry, Josephine Butler, Teresa, Joan of Arc, Catherine, and the Mother of God.

# XIII

## FACTS FOR FOUL WEATHER

IN this chapter, we come so to speak to the storm-zones in which some will find themselves. Let us take in sail.

There was, until lately, a queerly dressed old man who would stand in Hyde Park corner crowds, punctuating Christian evidence with the remark : ' Wot about herthquikes ? ' These phenomena had impressed his imagination deeply. Earthquakes, yes : God, yes : but not both together—that seemed to be his attitude, shared by numbers of the sincere and simple.

And there was the soldier I heard of, who after two years at the front, was going off on home leave. When he was nearly out of range of enemy guns, he was hit in the back by a long-distance gun and killed. As he was dying, he said to the chaplain, ' wasn't that just like God ? ' (Later, the chaplain knew that the man would never have said, ' Now wasn't that just like Jesus Christ ? ')

Of course it is *these* grim facts that trouble

the usual man and woman,—not difficulties of 'thought.'

No use to answer crudely: 'But a loving God didn't wish or will that accident, that cannon-ball, or that earthquake!' Such feeble quarter-truths make shipwreck of theology, of orderly thinking. They merely estrange the ordinary man and woman, and they antagonise the intrepid reasoner, religious and otherwise.

The nettle has to be grasped. Some nettles, when rationally grasped, become *clues*, irresistible signposts. This one does.

We ask: 'Will you kindly stand aside?' of the gentleman (whether a clergyman or Mr. Wells of *The Invisible King* phase) who tries to defend the goodness and mercy of God by sacrificing his omnipotence and providence. There is no use, in this world or the next, for a limited divinity which looks on, sorrowful but unable to affect the course of events in the world. We ultra-moderns (just like the great philosophers for once) demand reasons, counter-considerations, and justifying contexts and sequels to such human tragedies. Some of the reasons may be adjudged good and wise even if human intelligence can't quite fathom the purpose. *But other reasons may carry conviction independently.* This is where we do some stark and honest in-fighting, please: The

problem of evil, physical and moral, has to be faced. Faced not by itself merely, but in its vast context, present *and future*.

There we have hit it! '*And future*.' For as a relentless logician said over 1800 years ago, if *in this world only* we have hope, we (Christians even, or fortunate worldings either) are of all things most miserable, and consciousness would be a curse. One has often seen things happen to oneself, to friends, to close relatives, and to strangers at which one has impulsively said: 'This is a ghastly thing and no mistake!' Some of us have had a full store of trouble, and more may be to come; and death, anyhow. And any belief in the best—as Hardy said—'demands a full look at the worst.' Fairly cornered, we *have* to square up to it.

And the supreme mistake (we all are apt to make it) is to stare fascinated at the one bad episode exclusively, as though a *moment* can explain itself, as though one word accounts for the whole book, as though you can possibly make sense out of a single cross-section and ugly fraction of existence. It cannot be done. S. Paul couldn't do it; and you and I cannot. We may as well throw up the sponge right away *if the present is all*. Judge anything whatever in bits, and we make nonsense of it.

That soldier took this quick piece-meal view.

Excusable, human, emotional—but short-sighted. There is too much ego in the cosmos of all of us; the ego has its rights, but let us bear *more of the cosmos* in mind, and keep in view the vaster Plan. For existence is a huge, unending affair of *consequences:* and if my child or wife is struck down suddenly and in agony to-night, what I have to recognise (as soon as I can, as soon as I have made the usual demonstrations of human panic or grief)—is this:

That there are many sequels to it,—sequels complex and without termination. The chief sequel being, the immortality of the soul. With this goes the continuing plan of God in the spiritual world, of which this world is a rim and margin only—a kindergarten and vestibule.

That is a perfectly logical and philosophic view. It includes all the facts. Keen and searching minds have held it firmly and to their satisfaction, and on grounds of reason for centuries. They have included thinkers before the Christian revelation, and outside that revelation.

But a professing *Christian* has simply no option but to hold it. It is the whole point and basis of his creed and life. At bad times, it should be there—on the spot, on duty. It should be second nature with him, and more

than second nature. To *him*, it is a disgrace to scream or protest—beyond a very limited human point. His life-job is to believe and think the larger life, the indestructibility of spiritual entities, the overwhelming weight of the eternal future contrasted with the soon-forgotten instant of time, the triumphant vindication of the Order over against the momentary incident.

No need even for stoicism, or drink, or artificial means of forgetting it! The facts of philosophic vision and faith should be enough.

I believe that: therefore I keep sane. If I did not believe that, I might be logical when a horror invaded my routine life—and choose one of the many methods of escape which are patronised by those to-day who *don't* effectively believe it.

It follows starkly that without the One who 'brought life and immortality to light,' life *is* quite definitely 'an idiot tale of sound and fury signifying nothing,' a short bad dream for many (and for all reflective people) between a sleep and a sleep. *He* makes it worth while—as nothing and nobody else does. The End alone explains and justifies the journey and the tumbles and accidents on that journey.

So the argument comes full circle, and the identification of God with our security and welfare is seen to be complete.

Oh, I know—there are many alleviations when we hit a reef. There are friends and sympathy, distractions and sleeps, talk of 'troubles escaped,' et cetera. But they do not amount to much for the transfixed heart and the crucified or hopeless soul. They do not come near touching the spot. Let us be men and admit it, rather than sophists or sentimentalists. *God* is our refuge and our strength, and a very present help in times of trouble—and outside God and his enormous compensations and his resurrecting power, there are only a few draughty funk-holes, leaking to the weather, where death stalks with contemptuous ease. Hence if we don't take the *far* view and the *full* view, we are merely being like eight-day old puppies or kittens, blind and squirming and at the mercy of Casualty.

Even so, the *uses* of suffering, mental and other, will have to be taken into account boldly by any real believer. It is not open to him to avert his ken from half of human fate. This divine soul-alchemy is a big subject, treated fully by the realist masters of the spiritual life.

It is doubtful, however, how far a purely intellectual belief in immortality alone consoles a man in the blacker crises of his life. No doubt it makes more difference than he can at the time realise; it prevents excessive despair and helps

toward recovery of courage. Still, by itself, it is rather verbal and abstract : it lacks a warm actual something. Exactly what ?—

It is communion with a spiritual order that even heroic souls want at these hours of dereliction. They need as strong a counteracting force ; they ask for actual commerce, *now*, with that durable order of facts and spiritual being—

> ' For independent happiness ; craving peace,
> The central feeling of all happiness,
> Not as a refuge from distress or pain,
> A breathing time, vacation or a truce,
> But for its absolute self ; the Life, the peace,
> Stability without regret or fear.'

Now genuine religious activity does this. It cannot do the impossible ; but it can do wonders. It cannot immunise you from defeats, the sinister tricks of men, bereavements ; but it can neutralise their efforts by introducing new interests and goals, a new currency of ideas, a ' new nature ' or consciousness.

Some have been driven by the violence of events to religion first as a refuge, only to discover that it was, in essence, amazingly more—a something in its own right, a substantial world, independently of foul weather or temporal flux. Lives without this are mere modes or death and risk.

The Christian is corresponding with the only Environment that will not let us down. That resonant superior order of reality is murmurous with enduring presences, beings and values. It is his guarantee not of mere *survival* but of *arrival*. He does not only grasp It; but It returns the grasp, and therefore nothing that happens in space or time stands a chance of detaching him, 'neither death, nor height nor depth nor any other creature.'

We have all to emigrate soon. Anyone due to sail to another country looks out for connections and allies there. That is why one must admire the practical prescience of those who set up here and now communications with God and heaven. The best analogy to a church full of worshippers interacting with the Invisible is that of thousands of swallows busy conferring —and taking short trial flights from trees and telegraph wires before their long-distance migrations. By a similar instinct

> 'We sit here, shaping wings to fly,
> We name the Eternity.'

## XIV

### HOW PRAYER MOVES EVENTS

I AM still writing with my friend the Man in the Train at my elbow, knowing his questions and perplexities. And a fairly frequent point he puts is this :

" How can you expect to change God's will by prayer ? "

The answer is terse : You can't expect it. And you don't expect it. Nine-tenths of communion with God (to begin with) has naught whatever to do with seeking divine action upon events. Those nine-tenths are adoration, still contemplation, thanksgiving, love, renewal of one's sonship, contrition, asking forgiveness, and simple enjoyment of the Presence, in which (as Crashaw expresses it) men ' drink large draughts of intellectual day.'

But the tenth, frankly and legitimately, *is* petition : petition sometimes for definite influencing of outside happenings. And it is a good test of faith, to see whether you dare ask

these things—and take the answers, whatever they are, submissively, bonnily, with good grace.

If we shrink from this instinctive and natural right to petition, we can be sure there is something wanting in our faith or theory; that we are underestimating either the width of the Plan, the prevision of God, or our own filial rights. (Some church-goers are just as shaky about this as others. They may have been 'got at' by theorists, and their prayers lack simple ease, abandon and completeness.) The simple view is the profoundest after all. God is the God of matter, events, and movements no less than of souls. His power is not divided; as the world is one, so is Power one.

And—this is the point—your prayers count in it: they are foreseen, fore-ordained, and invited just as surely as the outside events that concern you were foreseen and ordered. The instinct was put there by the same Power that put the physical obstacle there.

Your praying is a 'force of nature' quite as inevitable, influential and effective as those forces with which it interacts, or which it counteracts. It doesn't 'upset the plan' from outside, for the two good reasons that it is not outside the plan, but inside it, as yeast works in the dough; and it 'upsets' nothing but

inter-works with the rest within the Divine intelligence and energy, to which it is even nearer than (say) gravity or physical forms of energy.

The instructed Christian (and frankly we cannot consider any other kind here) prays in the sure knowledge that his prayers have been foreseen by the total Wisdom 'from the beginning,' and that they *have been taken into account* equally with other factors, in the divine economy. It is exactly as if the All-knowing had said in eternity : 'I will cause my conscious creatures to have such and such a benefit : but since they had best earn it, I will cause them to ask for it.' Benefit and prayer in this way are seen to be indissoluble. It is rather as if you, a father of three children, decided now what their to-morrow's dinner, et cetera, should consist of,—but also that they should not have certain things in it unless they asked you for them. And we will assume you have always so influenced them that they *do* ask. In that case, you foreknow (in your finite way) that the children will get certain things, yet *you have made the asking a necessary part of the condition.*

Surely that is as clear as anything could be in an intelligence-run universe ? I submit to the sceptical modern mind that this accounts for

all the factors, and that it makes the lesser views look rigid—much as the 'epi-phenomenon' theory of consciousness, so dear to a few theorists in the past, looks to us now gratuitous. Of course we now know that consciousness influences and qualifies physical and historic events, that it *does* things and moulds things: and prayer, an extreme determination of conscious mind, will be recognised by science —when science is full-grown and adult—as a potent radio-active force, one of the 'laws' through which the Mind of the universe specially chooses and wills to work. (Though, being free, he need not literally grant every prayer put up.)

This interaction and pleading with the controlling pervading Mind is as genuinely a part of the whole working system as magnetism, gravitation, or organic growth. It is a power among other powers. When someone tells us that gravitation is absolute—a 'uniform' law of nature—he is mistaken about his facts. The nearest flower wrecks his statement. The flower defies gravitation, so to speak. It lifts up its delicate stem and crown *in the teeth of the force of gravity*. Yet does it abolish that force? It does not: it simply supplements it by *fuller force*—that of Life.

Conscious mind similarly overrules the

phenomena of vitality in the body; love and faith similarly in turn govern and raise the conscious mind. The universe is a song of degrees, a hierarchy of forces.

When we talk of 'laws' of nature, let us admit *all* of them, not a few arbitrarily selected only—and only the lowest! Let us include the psychological, the moral, the spiritual. And in surveying the great game, let us not look only at the players and the pieces, but at the continual Conditioner of the game. How can people object to his 'interventions' when he is 'intervenient' all the time? The laws of nature extend beyond the merely physical: and at the apex of this is the Law of the Divine Freedom, and the Law of the Divine Fatherhood. Immaterial forces like opinions and judgements make history, build or destroy towns, alter industries, decide migrations, modify architecture and the very skyline. The scientist worthy of the name recognises behind such common phenomena the spiritual.

When human intelligence matures, it will perceive that in multitudes of men in the past this great power of colloquy with the Master-Mind has too largely gone a-begging. It will recognise, in the words of a living novelist in another context, that 'the dark and solid houses were less solid than that something I knew to

be within myself that makes and unmakes houses and streets and towns and lands.'[1]

The effect of a Divine action may well be beyond the scope of the *ordinary* powers of nature—and yet not be a violation of the laws of nature. It may be as 'natural' (so to speak) for God to become man as for him to create man: to attend to man as to evolve him.

You and I act on the world around us in a purposive way; 'and every time we do so,' as Balfour said, 'it constitutes a spiritual invasion of the physical world; it is a miracle.' Familiarity blinds us to the remarkable implications of our everyday activity. Thus miracle, Providential guidance, and prayer are three names for particular instances of mind acting *via* matter, a fact we perceive every hour of our lives. The *how* of that action of yours and mine is by no means clear to our intellect, but the fact is the best known in the whole world. It is a fascinating subject for speculation how modes of existence like mind and matter, said to be so 'unlike,' which really appear to be more unlike than two facts could be in the same universe, *do* act upon each other. But there it is. Perhaps they are after all not so utterly unlike as our definitions paint them? They are

[1] Oliver Onions, *In Accordance with the Evidence.*

part and parcel of one and the same system; that is clear.

If there is one fact about your belief more clear than another, it is this. Once grant the existence of God, and the existence of the soul, it follows that the accessibility of one to the other must be complete.

There can be no metaphysical or physical obstacle at all. The only barrier possible is one of our own putting up, and therefore can be of our own putting down (that is, sin, a bad will, stupidity, indifference). Apart from that, the soul was made for God as the plant was made for the air and sun. It is as simple as that—with the same kind of simplicity.

The division of reality into 'supernatural' and 'natural' can be driven too hard and too far. The daisy in the field is supernatural—in the sense that, like all else, it issues from the Creative centre; but on the other hand, God and the realm of spirits are as natural as anything visible or created. All is one, in God. Nature has rightly been called, in principle, a projection of grace; and grace (or the personal dealings of God with men) is simply the larger Nature.

The same is true of the perfectly harmless word 'miracle' which makes some minds detonate. It is begging three questions to

label a miracle a ' breach of the order of nature.' *Whose* is the order, anyhow ? Who (so to speak) ' breaks ' it ? And what limitations are you putting on the conception ' nature ' ? If I break the law of my routine at my works, office, or home,—it is *mine* to do what I like with ; *I* also established it ; I set it going for *my* purposes ; I may vary it for the same purposes ! I am *its* master and maker ; it is not *my* prison-house. And what is true of you or me is truer of the Free Will of the Universe.

The religious life is thought of by the crowd as something rather ' difficult.' But men who know it from within tell us the contrary. The deeper a mind goes, the nearer it gets to simplicity. Plainly, it should be an easy, spontaneous and instinctive life, at the centre of it ; because God, and dependence, and hope, and love are natural to the better nature of men and women. Prayer is simply the Higher Natural, it is the breathing of the inmost mind and a raising of the mind's eye to the One who is our Home : it is a speaking aloud to the Mind that is upholding it—' closer than breathing, nearer than hands or feet.'

It should come to men more and more smoothly ; the very idea of it is against friction and strain. It should be a cure for awkwardness and hesitancy. (There will be struggles by it

against outside distractions, impediments, and lower impulses, but no struggle *in itself* to commerce with God. That should be increasingly instinctive as a child's relaxing and reliance on its parent or its bed.)

This is, in short, an excitingly interesting universe to live in. It is saturated by Mind to begin with ; and it is permeable and penetrable to intelligence. Its central Soul is pervious to our moral concentration and activity. Prayer also educates itself. As the breathing function of that deathless something in us, by practice it becomes bolder, better and wiser ; but even in its elementary phases it is surely the most dignified of all operations conducted by man on this planet ? Far more so, in most cases, than writing books, painting pictures, or turning out goods would be apart from it ; for these have a more transient significance, while prayer of the sort described here has its ways not only in time but in the eternal too. There are degrees innumerable of it : work and good will are an embryo of it. But embryonic forms of it are not good enough for awakened man : he has to know *explicitly* his and its rôle and object.

> ' And what are men better than sheep or goats,
> That nourish a blind life within the brain,
> If, knowing God, they lift not hands in prayer ? '

No, I cannot change God's plan from outside by prayer. But my prayer can be a necessary inside *part of his plan;* he may be ready to give after I have prayed long and well enough, and not before : so he who wills the end wills this means.

# XV

## SCIENTISTS ON THE 'TWO WORLDS'

SOME time ago Professor A. N. Whitehead, himself a distinguished mathematician with an extensive equipment in science, suggested that men of physical science are sometimes the obscurantists of the present day. (He might have added our undisciplined emotionalists in literature.) This philosopher (who has many to agree with him in the view) holds that they put up the chief barrier to the march of Reason —the speculative, disinterested and imaginative reason (he means). As J. W. N. Sullivan, the brilliant scientific writer, puts it in language which is stronger than I would personally use :

'The practical reason, in science, has been chiefly concerned in building up successful methods for dealing with its own restricted class of problems, and Professor Whitehead accuses scientific men of claiming for these methods a universal validity. They wish to apply the methods found valid in a limited field

to everything under the sun. They are hostile to all explanations that proceed from a different method; they are intolerant of criticism. Thus scientific men have managed very well, during the last three centuries, without using the notion of "purpose." The laws of physics and chemistry take no account of purpose or design. They describe a blind march of events. *But is this method of thinking good enough* when we come to consider living beings, including man? . . .

'Consider, for example, the designing, building, launching and sailing of a ship from Liverpool to New York. Are we to suppose that all this is as aimless as the motions of the sea-waves themselves? Yet the physiologists in their account of man's bodily motions, resent the importation of the idea of "purpose." We are to be content with the laws of physics and chemistry. Professor Whitehead regards this as a colossal example of obscurantism. Scientific men act as if a certain method were to be maintained at all costs. Evidence that cannot be handled by the method is simply ignored. Thus the speculative reason, which is always willing to adopt new methods in its attempt to understand the universe as a whole, finds its greatest opponent in modern science.

'Professor Whitehead maintains that men of

science are hindering the march of reason by insisting that their present methods are sacrosanct. These methods have, he says, proved their inadequacy to the fuller understanding of the universe. They are now pitfalls and stumbling blocks in the way of an advancing humanity.'

Those who know the writings of Mr. J. Needham, the Cambridge bio-chemist, find that he has made this point convincingly. 'Materialism,' he says, is quite useful as a methodological convenience—in the laboratory. Beyond that, it is inadequate: it explains nothing.

Scientists in fifty years and more from now will, some of us believe, not only generally admit this, but they will have gone far on the road to a (shall we say) more 'spiritual' interpretation of the whole, with its elements of life, consciousness, values, and thought. They are asking the following *kinds* of question (I quote Mr. Sullivan again, supplying the italics):

'How did that universe come into existence? According to science it *could not* possibly have been evolved from a more primitive universe. The laws of physics show that the trend is always from a more highly organized to a less highly organized state—never the other way

about. Must we conclude, then, that the universe was *created* at that moment, and has been left to run down ever since? This question takes us outside the bounds of science. The significant fact is that the physical *universe is an insoluble puzzle from the scientific point of view.* The laws of physics take us straight up to a dead wall, as it were. Professor Whitehead suggests that this fact indicates that we have omitted some general counter-agency in our description of the operations of the universe. There must be some general upward trend that we have not taken into account.'

Is there evidence of such a trend? There is. It is in the fact that *we* exist—living centres and founts of that upward purpose. Follow the reasoning carefully:

'Professor Whitehead points out that the doctrine of organic evolution does not in the least explain why the process should ever have occurred. The phrase "the survival of the fittest" offers no explanation. *For life itself has very little survival value in comparison with the inorganic matter from which it sprang.* A rock survives for hundreds of millions of years, whereas even a tree lasts only a thousand years. If "survival" was what nature aimed

at, *why should life appear at all?* Again, why should the trend of evolution be upward, so that higher and higher types are evolved? The doctrine of evolution does not explain this. The upward trend cannot be due to the influence of the environment, for the lower types are just as well adapted to *their* environment as are the higher types. The higher types, indeed, particularly man, actively attack their environment.

'Science has recognized and formulated the downward tendency in the universe; *it has not yet formulated, nor even generally recognised, the existence of the upward tendency.*

'Professor Whitehead carries his analysis yet further. He finds in the speculative reason itself a manifestation of the upward tendency of the universe. For it is by virtue of this faculty that the human species advances; it is the agency which produces successively higher types. It may be, therefore, that in reason and the speculative imagination we have *a peculiarly intimate knowledge of the character of that counter-tendency* which gives to the universe its upward trend.'

In other and plainer terms, the last word of a modern thinker is that in mind or soul, as we personally know it, is the most satisfactory clue

to God—to the constructive and creative power manifested in the universe. That is exactly what has been believed, almost unanimously, by a great assemblage of wise men down the ages—philosophers, poets, religious seers, saints, and mystics.

The presence everywhere in living things—but especially in the higher creatures—of altruism, group love, and sacrifice is an abounding and even awe-inspiring indication of the inmost nature of life, and is a valuable clue to the ultimate character of reality. I have dealt with great fulness with this ubiquitous fact in another book, *The Law of Self-Sacrifice in Nature, Man, and God* (Benn's 'Affirmations,' 1930); and have attempted there to set it correctly beside the considerably over-advertised facts of struggle, pain and competition in animate nature; believing that we shall never get very far on half-truths any more than we could march far on one leg.

Life is a fact as conspicuous as the inorganic. And in life, the facts of affection, pity, solidarity, co-operation, and later of spirituality and devotion, are every whit as real and significant as are rivalry, hunger, fight, and egoism.

How shall men discover approximately the nature of Reality unless they pluckily reckon with *all* its factors? The good, the self-

transcending, the noble have every bit as much right to be taken into account as the routine, the reflex, and the mechanical. One does not get the soul of a nation by omitting its finer, more awake and purposive characters. One does not envisage the 'spirit' of a book or a newspaper by analysis of its ink, paper, format, and processes. The method has been tried; but it is being tacitly and generally abandoned, and probably in future it will be pigeon-holed as one of the casualties of the infancy of inquiry.

The dogmatic materialist of the past can now be recognised as a dreamer who butted his head against a stone wall—the stone wall of what Huxley called 'spirit and spontaneity.' The gulf between the realm of conscious mind and physical process was very vividly expressed so far back as Tyndall, Huxley, and Spencer. The relation between the two is obvious: the chasm between them is equally obvious.

Science is of *moral* value: it provides us with one more powerful ideal of truthfulness, coolness, and comprehension. Yet 'the scientific man who is blind and deaf to great art is a wretchedly imperfect creature,' says a living scientist; 'His general outlook on life, his philosophy, is bound to be worthless. He lacks the actual data necessary to build a comprehen-

sive view of the world. . . . A scientific man, after all, might be no more than a highly trained barbarian.'

Professor J. S. Haldane's attitude is well known: 'None of the scientific interpretations of our experience are anything better than tools for particular and limited uses; *but the nearer they take us to a spiritual interpretation of experience the less unsatisfactory do they become.* They lead us up towards a final conception of God as the supreme and only reality, and of God present in each of us as Personality, and giving to each of us the only reality which we possess. It is the recognition of this in our conscious behaviour which, as it seems to me, constitutes religion. By recognition I mean no mere intellectual belief of any kind, but a practical recognition influencing our behaviour and our other beliefs, including scientific beliefs, at every point. If we insist on nothing but truth, nothing but realism, we are led to the standpoint of religion. We can't see in detail how all that appears to us is simply the appearance of God. All that we can see is that this must untimately be the case.'

In his *History of Materialism*, Lange wrote: 'There are only two conditions under which this (materialistic) consequence can be avoided. The one is the authority of philosophy, and

the deep influence of religion on men's minds. The other is the general spread of *philosophical culture* among all who devote themselves to scientific studies.' (II. p. 332).

Mr Joseph Needham of Cambridge (whose views I wrote of in the *Hibbert Journal*, January, 1930) says that Science, art, and religion are three sides of our expanding experience; and we men have not arrived at the final stage in any of them. Their apparent present lack of reconciliation is simply evidence that we have not finished growing. 'It is better to acquiesce in apparent contradiction, since time may revise it, rather than rest in a confused solution, since time will certainly destroy it.' He is anxious not to bring about a closure.

And Joad puts the case of philosophic belief thus: 'There are two worlds, the world in which we pass our daily life, and the world of which we are held to have fleeting glimpses in spiritual and mystical experience—the world of our present and the world of what we may hope will one day be our future existence.'

'There is nothing in the whole world of thought more dead than scientific materialism,' says F. R. Barry (*Saturday Review*, February 15, 1930). 'A system of thought which has no room for "values" is not an account of life as we know it. Leaving Man out of its Universe,

it has no way of bringing him in again. It only applies to the world of necessity; and Man belongs to the world of spirit.'

The aim of science is not to feather our nests or blow up our enemy's, not even to develop our intellects: it is to ascertain facts and laws. The other effects are mere side-issues. The aim of poetry and music is not to give lazy hedonists a sensuous pleasure of the nerves: it is to capture at least some vision of the æsthetic values which philosophers believe to exist in planes that are above this phenomenal world of broken lights, decay and change. The aim of religion is not to give people an assurance about 'number one,' nor to afford them that 'comfortable' feeling: it is to get if possible some intuition of and response to 'the High and Holy that inhabits eternity.' All these good things are good *because they are good*—not because they happen to yield other and minor advantages. Worship is good, emphatically not because it can yield a feeling of smugness, superiority, exaltation, or calm, or do any of the other things which it incidentally does—but because *vere dignum et justum est*. There you have said all. Religion, like science and art, and other activities, has its ardours, strains—and rewards: and nobody has the right to snatch the pleasures without undergoing the

disciplines. The latter are well worth while: they, too, are good in themselves.

Mr. Gerald Gould, a shrewd student of the subject, the other day said playfully that 'science is the continuous discovery of its own mistakes,' and appended a formidable list of abandoned theories that once overawed their generation. And now, says Andrade, 'the very electron is losing the only elements of simplicity and pictorialness which it possessed until lately, and is becoming a mass of equations.' Gone is the 'old confident view that a system of mechanics competent to explain the motion of heavenly bodies and of machines must be of universal application.' Even current formulæ may be scrapped next year, so it may be premature to perform operations on our inner religious instincts, beliefs and affections under the duress of the ebb and flow of opinion. 'The formula remains only a formula,' says Mr. Gould. 'It will tell us that certain things behave in a certain way—so far as our understanding has at present gone. But it will not be reality, or even begin to explain it. About reality we know only one fact for certain, that it must be vitally and immediately *related to experience*. Individual experiences may be deceptive but they cannot be unreal.'

Exactly what Browning said: 'One fact I

know, my own self-consciousness, 'twixt ignorance and ignorance en-isled.' It accords with Descartes, and with Eddington's recent saying that consciousness has been restored to the fundamental position.

The defeat of materialistic ideas has come from an unexpected quarter of science itself—physics. 'What is the sense,' asks Whitehead, 'of talking about a mechanical explanation when you don't know now what you mean by mechanics?' Another depicts physics as 'something we do not understand is being done to something we do not know.' The old moulds have been broken by Bohr, Heisenburg, and Born. There have been Schrödinger's interpretation of the Quantum, and the remodelled concepts of Minkowski and Einstein; while Eddington says, 'physics is no longer pledged to a scheme of deterministic law.' Materialism (as the bio-chemist Joseph Needham puts it) is methodologically convenient—and always untrue. We have Smuts's Holism, wherein, especially 'in mind and personality the mechanistic concept ceases to be of any practical use'; and Whitehead's idea of the world as *organic* mechanism, in which 'the concept of materialism only applies to very abstract entities.'

The wheel is coming full circle. Matter is coming to have more concrete and rich meaning

in its sensuous, æsthetic, emotional and religious appeal than as a phenomenon that can be intellectually explained or understood. We see again its stupendous significance as a spectacle, as a sounding voice, as a sign from Divine Mind to our minds and vision.

## XVI

### A RECIPE FOR THE 'LIFE-WORSHIPPERS'

WE have a large school of writers, very fluent and assertive since the War, which goes in for what is called self-expression and life-worship. But it often turns out that the self which is expressed is the cruder and lower self, and that the life that is worshipped is the raw stuff of appetite, of a savage, Congo-like quality. The advocacy of the indulgence of every passion, the refusal to select, only leads in practice to a sadness deeper than the sadness of the brutes. Why not learn from the bitter experience of the Pagans, who tried it all before?

*Life loves pattern and seeks order.* It has the strong instinct to rationalise and intelligise its actions and experiences. It very soon hates this cult of the luscious and dishevelled, and sets about making outline and system. In thought it insists on principle; in morals and human relations, it spontaneously demands and gives rights, duties and conscience; in art it

evolves a logic of selection, limitation, and preference.

That is the sole reason why life and mind have got anywhere at all. They opted from the first for Form and Direction, preferring quality to quantity, significance to mere sensation. Hence our triumphs, and the emergence of fine faculties and spiritual types, traditions and loyalties. It is just the choice, delicate *best* in man that is against this recent outspoken propaganda ; but it takes the morally developed and intellectually vigilant to resist the enormous new literary, dramatic, and pictorial suggestion —and the readers of this neo-Paganism less and less conform to that description. The untrained, who seldom read anything but fiction and to whom psychology, philosophy, and the classics composed previously to 1900 are closed territory, fall for it as a dense populace without inoculation go down before certain diseases. It is a crude, heady brew, served in style, and it is swallowed usually at a gulp. ' Do what you will,' is the counsel ; there is no ' higher ' or ' lower ' in man—give *all* your impulses and appetites full rein ; live furiously ; ' burn the candle at both ends,' quotes a young authoress I know, on her title page this very month as I write—' it gives a lovely light ' ; and this young Bacchante is only one of hundreds who

mistake the baser raw stuff of living for life.

These excited amateurs of sensation are really foolish, even though they *are* in reaction against insular Anglo-Saxon puritanism or smugness —a legacy from the religious Great Frost of the sixteenth century. They destroy values and dissipate their finer inner forces—merely to spite Mrs. Grundy or shock Philistia. Where they show gaps in their culture is in supposing that it is Christianity they are judging. It is not. They have obviously never experimentally known the real thing; for the real thing is bonny, intensely life-giving, vibrant with energising interests. Where it is *lived*, it creates a strong upward draught and momentum that 'breathes' the life, favours the heroic adventurous soul, and brings an incomparable enlargement and deepening of personality. Aldous Huxley rages at dualism, hatred of matter and the body, and Manicheeism. Excellent; the Church, in more measured language, long ago condemned that. Yet he—or anyhow the lesser lights—in their rash off-hand way imagine that these heresies are Historic Christianity—which anathematises them. It is a pity that there is not some simple agreed syllabus of instruction in logic, history, and the bearing of ideas for all writers who take

on themselves the influencing of the millions who have been taught to read print.

How one wants to warm their starved nerves with actual experience of the vivid Catholic Religion of life—the reality they are really after. It brings us (as Chesterton puts it) many delights

'Before we go to Paradise by way of Kensal Green.'

With all its disciplines, tensions, and ardours, it is the bloom on life, it 'makes all things new,' and it beats the unsatisfactory god Pan at his own game measured in joy. Besides, the Pan cult is a desperate artificial revival, by victims of a plutocratic civilisation—and such revivals do not come off. The modern rebels or sinners indulge their appetites not because they enjoy it, but from a theory, or because it is 'the thing,' or they are observed, or so as to ward off neurasthenia by having no 'inhibitions.' A dreary affair when you have seen it at close quarters and in the private lives of the rebels. They do not get the same poor satisfaction from irregularities, as a less self-conscious generation. The former *abandon* of iniquity has been lost: when all your set is going in for a cantankerous immoralism, and very talkative about it, what is the *cachet* of revolt? Gone! The 'emancipated' sinner of to-day in most cases is an inverted prig.

Millions of our young read these apologias for atavism by writers who are merely in revolt against some Clapham or Pudsey of their adolescence; and the revolt itself is as naive, single-track, and suburban as what they denounce. Their cue would be to get on to another level. There exists a philosophy, an atmosphere, a culture, society and creed which is the Universal on earth, the Eternal come into time; it gives life in its essential form, it is based on an expansive personal loyalty and enthusiasm, and whatever are the promises of life 'are in him, *Yea*.' It enriches and intensifies the 'whole man, body, soul, and spirit'—all three; transfigures existence with a whole compass of new values and opens fresh perspectives. With a balanced vision of the world —and worlds upon worlds beyond that—it brings a divinely satisfying act of worship, a matchlessly right personal hygiene; a society with ideals, hope and a future; living peace and self-possession; outlet for unselfish expression, scope for the faculties; unfathomable succours, and exhilarating prospects this way and that. Such is the vivid, warm life of the immortal community the Church, with its oceanic murmur, its solidarity through space and all times, its variety of expression, its understanding sympathy with men in all their

stages and phases. And then, in ignorance of this exciting environment of pulsing life and experience, young moderns set out to snatch life's secret by having a latchkey, by chaotic living, or a separate establishment, promiscuity, violent talk or nasty writing to give a ' kick ' to tired nerves—and by other commonplace devices on which the gayer wisdom of the Church Catholic long ago fixed the *mot juste*, ' the husks that the swine did eat.' It is merely as if steel went back to crude ore and slag—and cinders. In place of this hubble-bubble of un-tempered, un-sublimated sub-human desires, the merrier shrewder Christian tradition brings considerate affection, faithfulness, control, proportion, the steady mind, a far outlook, the secret of all-round *wholeness*,—all those things in short which our exasperated or wistful pleasure-stalkers crave and cannot get. One has only to read its Testament to see how many hundreds of times occur its key-words,—power, fulfilment, fulness, joy, life, love, attainment, abounding, completion, et cetera.

Thought, that starved spectre which some men have cursed (one writer calls it a ' diabolic ' gift, another calls it Nature's ' subversive mistake ')—finds its delight at last here : ' ye are completed in him.' As for renunciation, Christianity only asks, sensibly enough, that

you shall drop the dross to hold the gold, and forego the dirt—in order to accommodate more manna.

The imaginatively, intellectually adult mind can find in this life the most eventful and satisfying of all careers. And it will reassert its attraction upon men more and more as it is seen to be the supreme Romance—romance, for once, without a disillusion concealed round the corner; a love-affair to which the end is not change and recrimination or satiety; a Career whose theatre is eternal and its Objective ever-during. To it, goodness is not an affair simply of avoiding wrong, it is an aiming at the Best. It is not a technique of caution or abstention, but of enthusiasm and venture. It has its own fires. It is a career in its own right: *a full Life, not a refuge from living; a whole, not a department.*

This ethical ideal life culminating in love and worship is an enterprise inviting the co-operation of many faculties. It is the rich minds that get most out of it, the less organised minds naturally less.

Reason takes you further than reason. It asks you to take the step beyond. In common-sensibly trusting my deeper reflective self, with its postulates and needs—I am so far trusting God, who constituted it. A believer in life

and mind is very near to being a believer in God their inspirer. *In* our longings and speculations he can fairly be recognised at work.

This answers the view sometimes heard that Christianity is in some way repressive of life. They have been led astray at the start, by simple surface appearance; not knowing that the Cross is a symbol of moral triumph and of resurrection; and that self-discipline is the well-known device for more life and fuller. Man owes it to himself at least to hear a few good preachers and lecturers, to include this branch of spiritual adventure in the books he buys, to clear the shoddy from his life so as to make a little room for this, to attend some typical religious festivals which express the grandeur of the Faith. It is just as well to see the Thing itself in action, *now*, *in* 1930–31, as to have versions of it fed to us from estimable gentlemen who themselves long ago ceased to go anywhere near it, and who tilt persistently at windmills that were dismantled a quarter of a century ago. Let the critics admit to their minds the disturbing fact that *believers think*, and are not all in a torpid state like flies in winter. There is a long ancestry of speculation and analysis behind the creeds. A hum of intellectual activity proceeds in circles which a superficial glance would dismiss as ' traditional.'

In fact, it takes quite a lot of mental activity to hold a creed constructively, firmly, and well.

Contrary to what *a priori* writers would expect, an arresting fact is that religion is flourishing, popular and vital *in exactly the same degree that it is dogmatic* (i.e. definite and teaching). It is so everywhere. It is so as between Communions. It is so as between individual church buildings and pulpits. I read, for instance, some critical friend's pamphlet or article suggesting that 'if only the churches' will jettison article A, restate article B, revise article C, and alter certain practices, they will be more acceptable. Three out of five possibly, who write at all, write that; it is the new kind of automatic writing.

Then I look round at things as they are. Awkwardly enough, things as they are contradict the assertion. The religions which do none of these things have vitality, full churches, and a singularly confident outlook. Why should this be the case? How do the periodical writers, and even some of the serious ones, come to miss this conspicuous fact, or, seeing it, miss the deeper explanation? On the other hand, as fast as some pulpits and bodies have let doctrines out of the window, the congregations have gone out by the door. The mass of commentators, as I say, miss these master facts.

It is partly that many human minds respect clarity, firmness, and articulateness in matters of ethics and belief as in other departments. Confidence too begets confidence; consistency inspires trust. But more. The speculative reason also likes something to bite on. It is not only the weak who like some foothold: it is the mentally strong. A certain amount of fluidity and elasticity is desirable: but the basic need remains,—the need for some fixity, an irreducible minimum of fact and intellectually obligatory credence. Mystery, by all means. But mistiness, no. Serious, active-minded people there are who have a rooted objection to formulæ which change so as to perplex recognition if they turn their heads awhile. Nobody respects a plasticene creed. The passion for continuity and agreement of doctrine is a very respectable and legitimate human requirement. It can go with—and does go with—a willingness to learn, to recognise new lights, to believe in unfolding and development, and an ability to interpret and speculate.

Above all, those who are persuaded that God *is*, that (2) he has appeared incarnate in history, (3) has accorded developed manhood a Personal and social revelation and (4) intends its safety and continuance through the time-process; such thinkers cannot evade in their

minds the consequence, that authority and conservatism, with growth and advance, will be two of the fundamental notes of the body which witnesses to these stupendous facts. It will not, in essentials, be protean, fluid, and variable.

It will speak out with authority—such authority as a world of sin and error needs, such authority as the New Testament Church showed so startlingly. . . .

From his raw stuff, man has to *select* on some principle. He will never get anywhere or do anything with pessimism or optimism, with man-worship or man-contempt. For we *know* (why hide the fact in brilliant verbiage ?) there is a part of us which cannot be valued too much —and something in us which cannot be 'hated' or controlled too much. No philosophy can last twenty years which does not pick out *both* facts, in an emphatic beam of light. Only the philosophy which is two-eyed—and has the pluck to face man's inner mixture and chaos, and invincibly to make Holiness and unity out of it—will ride the centuries, as it has already ridden twenty centuries. Other philosophies are chalk eggs that lure the thoughtful to sit to no purpose. Or, when they are not this, the eggs hatch out disconcerting things.

My own opinion of Mr. Huxley is that his

hard honest mind is at present handicapped by a cultus of moods and impulses ; that he would do wonders if he went into training with Aquinas, or Augustine, or even took a Von Hugel or Maritain as sparring partner. His poly-egoism would consist in alternating between moral and a-moral behaviour, in never allowing ourselves to be shut out from ' evil ' or shut out from ' good,' and in short (as Desmond MacCarthy puts it) ' in living like a kind of Chicago crook or a Renaissance noble in a state of grotesque moral immaturity.' But the double life, the multiple personality, are diseases that lead to dissoluteness and dissolutions. Real life won't have it. God and Mammon are each jealous ; each demands the will ; and no man can serve alike the temple and Venusburg, the cloister and the taproom, the soul and the flesh. We cannot walk up a dozen roads in opposite directions at the same time—though many are trying to, with results that lead to consultations in a neurologist's room, or even to a Crowner's Quest.

The picture of our time sketched in these chapters could be filled in by diagnoses from Miss Sackville-West, Beverley Nichols, the Waugh brothers and others ; and the one hopeful fact in common is the recognition that the current outlook will not do and will not

last. The first-named writer puts into a Georgian's mouth the admission: 'We are so aware of our own insufficiency that we take refuge in mere negation. Enjoyment is the only positive thing left us, and even that, like a surfeit of sweets, makes us sick.' Or take the only character in a novel of Mr. Huxley's who is Christian and anti-sceptic: '"There is still the old source of strength—old, but not dull," said Rachel Quarles. "There's nothing less dull than God. But most young people won't believe me when I tell them so, even though they are bored to death with jazz bands and dancing. . . . They're on the wrong road. If people asked, How can we please God and why aren't we better, they'd achieve happiness without ever thinking of it."'

Well, young things and post-War experimenters are pathetic and clumsy, without the profound and subtle technique of unselfishness embodied in the invitation: 'Learn of Me and you will find rest. My yoke is sweet and easy, My burden light.' There, laid bare, is the secret mechanism of lasting human delight. Happiness is a windfall from the fullest sort of living—the spiritual. It is a by-product. The best possession is self-possession; and comes by self-forgetfulness.

These are facts and laws of life as real as

the law of gravitation, to ignore which is to ride for a fall. It is not simply that Christ's irresistible logic will win, it already *has* won among those men of insight who have put it to the proof: only, this one discovery of the ages which genuinely matters has not leaked out in certain quarters, that is all.

## XVII

### THE PERIL OF THE PARTIAL VIEW

HUMAN nature is easily put off with a fragment of anything, instead of the whole.

Different sets of people get hold of some succulent morsel of truth—and at once retire with it, as one's dogs do with bones, and gnaw it unsocially in a corner; heedless of 'God's plenty' on the central table. Why?

To be Christian, it is necessary to carry a various spiritual and intellectual cargo. A man cannot mentally live on a few favourite texts, a narrow 'ism or a mere aspect of things. He cannot develop a true manhood, or influence the world if he is so narrow. It is an odd human trait—this desire to see their table stand on one leg, and their coach go on one wheel. The earth is thickly dotted with parties, sects and leagues which have entered into a compact to see one thing only, and in one way only.

But the vision disclosed by a sound Christian metaphysic is unrivalled in breadth, splendour,

and significance. Our trouble is that many have allowed to lapse into pious platitudes the most astonishing statements ever made about God, the universe, and the destiny and experiences possible to the spirit of man. So far as there is a cure for ills—social, mental, credal—it is here: Strive to achieve *wholes*, strive to *believe* wholes, and strive to *become* wholes, and parts of greater wholes.

Too many of us want order, beauty, system, without freedom, enthusiasm, and elasticity. Others stake everything on the last three qualities and suspect the first. Some are all for emotion and intuition: others all for science and logic. Others again swear by preaching and little else; others undervalue it. Each is right in what he affirms; each is wrong in what he denies.

The psalmist 3000 years ago called on '*all* that is within him' to praise the Lord. The Hebrew temple-builders and social legislators may not have had the Hellenic versatility, but they had a *sense of completeness* which incited them to offer up every activity and hold back nothing—craftsmanship, crops, musical skill, poetry. If the Creator determined that it takes all sorts of things to make a universe, it is clear that it takes a diversity of things to constitute a full man or a full religion.

It will always be a curiosity, for instance, how music—one way of expressing the inexpressible, one way of tribute to the Infinite—ever came to be distrusted by some sects. Cardinal Newman spoke truth when he said these tones seem to have 'escaped from some higher sphere: they are the outpourings of eternal harmony in the medium of created sound; they are echoes from our Home; they are the voice of angels, or the Magnificat of saints, or the living laws of Divine Governance, or the Divine Attributes: something are they beside themselves which we cannot compass, which we cannot utter.'

On the other hand, I have friends who make great music and art their *only* modern wicket-gate into the unseen, try to make it serve as a religion: *and they fail.* The soul still waves its tentacles piteously in their air asking, Where is he whom I desire? For personality *will* have Personality: conscious mind flies irresistibly to its answering Consciousness, as one element rushes to meet another affinity. 'Speak to him, thou, for he hears, and spirit with spirit can meet: closer is he than breathing, nearer than hands or feet.'

Imagination! That is the need of many of those who are religious, and of those who are not. 'The gospel is a gift to the imagination,'

said the American, Bushnell. 'Whoever would have the truth-world overhang him as an empyrean of stars, complex, multitudinous, striving antagonistically yet comprehended height above height and deep under deep in a boundless score of harmony—what man soever reaches with true hunger after this and will offer himself the *many-sided* forms of the scripture with a perfectly ingenuous and receptive spirit, will find his nature flooded with senses, vastnesses and powers of truth such as it is even greatness to feel.' And words at all times fail to express the magnificence of the scheme of Christianity. The more one exercises the mind on the religion of Jesus Christ, the more one is impressed with its wisdom, magnificence and thorough practical adaptation to every need and faculty of man.

Let believers become far more intellectually proud, in short, of the width and inclusiveness of their world-philosophy; for it is hospitable to all truth and research, and in it potentially 'are hidden all the treasure of wisdom and knowledge.' We should have to recognise as allies such diverse activities of the Spirit of God and the spirit of man as Theology, physical science, ethics, classic scholarship, evangelism, art, music, poetry, humour, sport, ritual, splendour, asceticism *and* æsthetics, order *and* liberty.

Who ever heard of an organisation lasting long that despised beauty? History is mounded with their remains. As we have the grandest things to say to the world, say them grandly, with the maximum of resources.

This is a very different attitude from a fearful watching of some 'spirit of the age,' tapping the barometer and scanning the current of fashion. The feverish anxiety to find acceptable ways of trimming religion to the popular mentality does not work. (If the message is delivered boldly, augustly, and intelligently it will shape the popular mind *to it*.) Trimming encourages a bright shallowness which seems alive but is really only lively and unspiritual. Breeding a contempt for abiding standards, it ignores the vital connection between hidden roots and the fruits, between principle and action.

Lack of touch with the essential and eternal, and the historic and dogmatic, robs not only religion but art and poetry of the austere majesty, the *other-worldly grandeur* which alone can enthrall and satisfy the soul. Find *truer*, not 'easy,' concepts of the inconceivable. It is hopeless to replace the 'strait way' by an arterial road furnished lavishly with ecclesiastical petrol pumps; or to manufacture cheap garments of holiness in artificial silks. That

spoils all the true splendour of our mysterious inheritance. The living heart of religion, which alone gives meaning to its symbols and allures men to its sacrifices and obligations, is precisely that *sense of the supernatural*—of those abysmal mysteries beneath the surface of our life which give it nobility and meaning.

Only by returning to the most pure and disinterested of the sciences, the true science of Ultimates, will our religious notions escape triviality, oddity, sectarianism, or that perennial tendency to prefer the useful to the austere, the popular to the profound, which vitiates so many well-intentioned re-interpretations one hears. Fortunately the cure for all temperamental or doctrinal aberrations that may occur in Christian bodies is to be found at the deep centre of Christianity itself. The more they return to that centre (which is God in Christ, the incarnation and all it implies) the nearer to understanding each other do various Christians get.

Another thing. *This* Christianity is a tremendous spur to mental and all modes of vitality, and tones up the mind, will, and affections. It does the same as (but more than) art, dance-music, sport, nature-love, friendship, and romantic affection do for the human mentality. As an historic fact it has been a

fruitful cause of many such forms of expression. The coming of the Eternal Son into human space-and-time terms, as we believe, did (as a fact of history) thrill whole races of men into a new *compass* of experience and new art-forms, to say nothing of endowing men with an utterly richer science of the deeps of Personality and a finer measure of ethics, and it gave life a wider emotional range and a new colour-depth.

To some modern young 'life-worshippers,' therefore, we can but reply by pointing to the creativeness and expansive power which the Religion of the Incarnation has exerted on the energies of the races that embrace it. Beauty and strength, such as it has, attract necessarily the strong and fine types. It is notorious too that it prolongs as well as deepens psychic health in individuals and communities; its survival value is remarkable; whereas their transient philosophies monotonously issue in gloom and exhaustion.

The idea that *things* as such can be evil is unfairly attributed to Christianity. It teaches that it is the *use* of them which is good or bad, in relation to the personality's higher interests. And then, take the modern anger on the subject of pain: religious common-sense knows that pain and strain-points do exist and have a use.

It is not through pleasures or even talk and ideas that the world is carried to its higher levels, but through effort, cost and pang. Even the poet learns in suffering what he teaches in song ; the saint certainly no less. It is through blood that we have reached our freedom, and through the Cross that untold good has irrigated the world.

And because this is so, the Christian is not necessarily the Fixed Smiler. Onlookers have no right to expect him to be chronically 'radiant.' But let it not be concluded, from his high seriousness, that he is a 'death-worshipper.' To be able to do without things here and there, because his life is too full of better things, is a mark of intense vitality, not its opposite. The essence of life or art is to know how to leave some things out, and what to put first in importance.

In the long run, Christian philosophy repeatedly triumphs over the types who scatter and squander themselves over multiple lures, and who come to write books (such as I have just read) describing their 'nausea of living, which rose like a tidal black wave and threatened to choke' the novelist 'hero.' He 'belonged to a generation of unbelief, and nature was weeping over her mistake in giving birth to that subversive, mischievous thing, our mind.' The

mistake was not nature's; it was his own—and his schoolmaster's.

After Our Lord's own assurance, 'I came that they may have Life, and have it more abundantly,' it would seem wasted effort to present a pallid, partial image in the place of him who was all love, courage, creative insight, power, sympathy; a healer and restorer; who not only said Yea to the wholesome things of existence (nature, children, friendship, love), but revealed new vistas of significance in shadow, loss, pain, and the Cross!

*That* is a task fit for a seer and a God. Any minor poet can string rhymes about flowers, sunrise, wine, and song, but how many of them can transfigure *suffering?* Christ's spiritual vitality was equal to transforming and using these bitter elements. Christianity does not dictate the rough suppression of any healthy joy in innocent activities and things; it baptises, regulates and grades them. When it counsels giving something up, let us not miss the whole point of the Christian life—which is that it does so as an expression of love and loyalty to an adored Person; so that the act of renouncing (or choosing) is a free one, a joyous mode of expression. The affection and purpose motiving it all make it a pleasure; a fact we all understand by the plain analogy of going without

something, or suffering something, for one of our loved ones. It is *natural*. And Christianity is the higher natural.

The more elements a man can bring under the light of his religious vision, the finer will be his religion, those elements, and his own life too. It must be so. For there is more *in* it. There is more to offer. Thought, skill, service, beauty, ritual, art, music, friendship—it is just the combination of these to the glory of God (and therefore to the good of men) that constitutes religion. To evade and neglect them solves nothing, and produces only the *zero* life. It is selfish or idle to abandon these activities of the spirit to the world, the flesh, and the devil, which however are very glad to have them. That is to widow the Faith and to orphan the arts.

## XVIII

### RADIO RELIGION

HAVE religious broadcasts increased or diminished attendance at places of worship?

It is no academic question. There are some answers to it which I am afraid are not too good. Example: it is not quite to the point for non-churchgoers to tell us (because we knew) that religion is not identical with going together to worship, and that the Pharisees were great temple-treaders yet some of them will get to heaven long after the harlots. Those who think two steps ahead will recognise that this wasn't meant by Christ as an argument against corporate adoration and prayer (he was himself a frequenter of synagogue and temple for worship, and gave a very perfect example here as in all ways!)—but he meant it as a warning against *insincere* attendance. Visible worship together was so necessary to the apostles that they actually used the Jewish temple and synagogue at first.

On the other hand, I think we must be fair and admit frankly that a very widespread *interest in* religion or curiosity about religious questions is not the same thing as a widespread religious quality of life or belief. They may and could go together, but it is not safe to say they *are* doing.

This is just a little clearing-up, before we really get started.

The advent of this magnificent invention is sheer gain in the case of (1) those who never did enter places of worship anyhow, and now do hear spiritual truth well put, and (2) in the case of those of our sick and infirm who can't get out at all.

But if it keeps many lazy and away from collective address to God?

If there *were* some thousands of these fire-siders, who were once pillars of a church, what would it mean? Well, a vast human and spiritual loss. Where *life* is there will be found organisation, with outlets for expression, and active functioning. 'If Religion is quick in you,' said a *Radio Times* writer this March, 'you are bound to have your thoughts about it, and those thoughts put into more or less ordered form will be your *theology*. It will invade your feelings, and drive you to acts of communion, reverence, and adoration. It will

direct your will, so that you will desire to act with others in making your belief potent and real in the organisation of the world.'

Or in a more homely way. A man keeps home together with the woman he loves. All that he does, coming and going in and out of the house, will be done in the atmosphere and spirit of love for her—it may be in lighting fires, brushing boots, mending shelves or general conversation, but it will all be more or less indirectly for the sake of her. But now and again he will want *direct* personal communion, to call her by dear names. All persons—being spirits—expect and deserve special and personal attention occasionally. Why, half our society is sick for lack of it.

It is precisely the religious man of good will (who exercises religion in all he does), who feels the need at times of a *more definitely concentrated way* of expressing it. He wants to focus all his personal life into one burning point of devotion, to lay bare his heart. Love has got to do this, or it is hurt and mortified. This longing cuts very deep: without a doubt the instinct for 'saying it out' was implanted there by the God who (in some infinite and supernal way) must love the direct face-to-face of his spirit-creatures.

And in most ordinarily constituted beings,

the urge arises to give this direct, frank, and explicit homage from time to time *with others*. It is only fraternal, only human to do so. The Armistice Silence, even, gains to you individually because it is ' reverberated ' and intensified by the million round you. Habitually to avoid community acts of visible worship looks anti-social and pharisaic,—or anyway risky and careless : because feelings that don't achieve appeasement by outlet and expression soon die.

Over the centuries comes the pleading voice of the apostle, when there were secession moves, ' Forsake not, brethren, the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is.'

And (to clinch it) the burning heart and crisis of Christian worship happens to be an intimate corporate Act, visible, tangible, touching beyond words. This never can be broadcast. Glorious music, yes (I am listening to ' The Meistersingers ' to-night, Sunday) ; truth and good sense, yes. But not the intensely personal transaction of God and Christ through and by his company of the faithful. There, bodily presence is part of the act.

Meeting together, itself, has a sort of sacramental virtue and result. Well do many patients know it, who listen in from beds that detain them ; gladly would they be *there*,

and listening with their eyes, and spelling out their love in deeds and words.

The church's *raison d'être* is that it is a family and a mystical body, an incorporation and fellowship—it is not an 'audience' to listen, nor a choir to sing. That is the searching distinction one has to make in these days.

Good luck to wireless religious broadcast. But better luck to the genuine thing.

I don't care if you or I are sometimes a little 'bothered' at church by this person or that affair. *Go*—and be bothered! If it comes to that, everything that has a human side (home, work, art, study) has a side that doesn't spell ease.

'Yes,' some will say, 'but does the Church want us?' Apparently there are districts where the shepherds do not seem to wish to add to their flock! Indeed, I have heard some—a very small minority—say they discourage people meeting under church auspices, for instance, because those gatherings may exhibit little personal disputes or jealousies. Such a one should be logical and discourage life, since life means pain and loss as well as joy; veto marriage, because marital tiffs are probable: stop business, because of its risks, and births because they are a prelude to trouble. His young folk inevitably go out elsewhere to meet

and marry; his flock is too likely to be divided into old routineers and young mutineers.

A word now to the highly vitalised young and intelligent who are wroth because they are not harnessed!

A grievance is a crashing bore, best kept in its place. In any case, religion has far more in it than outlet for service of the kinds which some officialism is apt to deny you. Its supineness is sad; but not fatal. The *main* things are still left to you—belief, thought about it, worship, sacraments, fellowship. With these, you may defy the routine or the slackness around you—whether in the world or in an exceptional, isolated locality. The bigger half of the loaf is better than no bread. It is silly to throw away in a pet what you have got because there is something you have not got. Transfer that business maxim to church life, and you will be acting with adult sanity.

The blind spots of good men and good institutions are an incessant cross that the wide-awake Christian idealist will bear. The remedy is not to rob his church of his zest and force by 'blowing up,' but to stop in and remember that the supreme and characteristic function of the Church is tenaciously to witness to a few vast truths, valid eternally. If she does that, she is fulfilling her chief life-purpose.

In a jerky, inconsequent age, the Church's work is to *teach*.

That there are sleepy people occasionally in local charge is no reason for disinheriting oneself! Look over and away from such, at what is yours for the enjoying. The feast is good, even if the service of it is negligent in this spot or that.

Surely one does not believe Christianity because it is socially useful, or gives an opportunity even for service and expression, but because it is *true*. And one does not look at a church as a place for work and help, primarily, but as a place for corporate adoration, learning, and a channel of spiritual good.

Ecclesiastical institutions *have* to be largely conservative (the secular critic does not usually give them a square deal here); they cannot afford mere experimentalism; and order is heaven's first law, albeit not its only law.

To some of us the Church is, quite simply, the focal point of our loveliest, happiest experiences; her chancel and aisles are to us a very heaven of sight and of sound; there, not once but continually, God has talked with us in the cool of the day, and we have walked with the Son of God in the divinest of intimacies. In times of stress we have looked forward to worship there with our brothers as a weary

field-labourer longs for the shade; and at all times we find on her altars a Presence sweet as summer to the houseless needy.

Between this ante-chamber of heaven and the flowing crowds in the roaring street, however, there must be a *link*. That link is largely the laity. Should we see periodic secessions from within organised religious bodies, (evangelisers, Salvation Armies, new connexions, and the like) if authority had always in the past arranged outlets for the brains, goodness and vitality that were at its disposal? The parable of the talents applies inside as well as outside the Church. Neglected, those talents betake themselves to politics, to other causes, to non-religious interests. Useless only to blame 'the spirit of the age'! The spirit of the age needs criticism and reply; but it also needs *harnessing*. Half its trouble is that it is out of collar, 'master-less' as Wells says, undirected, inadequately or wrongly occupied.

We are using half our talents at present, and the results are proportionate.

## XIX

### A GOOD WORD FOR THINKING

'I KNOW of no nation,' said Sir Henry Hadow to some English industrialists at Balliol, Oxford, recently, 'which has such a power of letting statements flow off its back. It comes—this extraordinary power of *withholding attention*—from our national indolence, our disinclination to take trouble. We always do that with reluctance. It is even our pride to think that indolence is one of our possessions. When you hear people inveigh against the Government, you ask, "Which way did you vote last time?" and they at once turn the conversation to the position of women in India!'

From such a mild and cool judgement as Hadow's, that is severe; surely it is just?

But in this little examination of conscience we are going to be fair, and admit that to an extent this lethargy of the brain is a flaw in other people too. Maeterlinck had not us particularly in mind when he wrote: 'Consciousness and intellect will long dwell in the

midst of errors and faults without perceiving them, and longer still without effecting a remedy. If there is a being who is called specially to organise life in accord with pure Reason, it is man. And yet see what he makes of it. Compare the mistakes of the beehive with those of our own society. The earth's surface is painfully and insufficiently cultivated by two (or three) tenths of the whole population ! Another tenth is absolutely idle, usurping the larger share of this first labour. The remaining seven tenths are condemned to a life of perpetual half-hunger. . . . Yet I know of no other being which has been fashioned to produce this strange fluid, which we call Thought, Intelligence, understanding, reason, soul, spirit, cerebral power, justice, knowledge—for it has many names though only one essence. It is the most precious, difficult state to which we can be raised. To this essence all things within us are to be sacrificed.'

Shaw was speaking angrily, no doubt, but not without truth when he suggested thirty years ago that most of our race value visible material success (money, ease, and precedence) more then clear-headedness, spiritual advance, or the arts ; that Anglo-Saxondom is determined ' to tell and be told lies about everything, and has the power of dealing acquisitively and success-

fully with facts while keeping them, like disaffected slaves, rigidly in their place—that is, *outside the moral consciousness*.' He claimed that too few of us even *want* 'accurate and complete consciousness of things—intellectual mastery of them.' Yet surely that desire is the very mark of awakened spirits and of a real civilisation? Mr. Kipling told some public schoolboys this year that thinking 'incurs change of mind, which may be painful—therefore it isn't done.' Mr. Noyes remarked just before that, 'when you sit down to think things out, people ask you if you have a headache.' And Mr. Santayana says the typical—or the most frequently met—Englishman instinctively halts short of speculative truth as in the distance it threatens his present equilibrium of comfort, mood, and habit.

'At dinner,' says Froude, 'my neighbour, a considerable person, asked me "confidentially," if I believed in a future state. I do not know why he should have been shy in putting such a question. There is none of greater moment to all of us, none on which we have a better right to seek such advice as we can find; and shyness and reticence are no evidence of the completeness of our conviction, but rather of the opposite. *We dare not look into one another's minds for fear of what we find there*.'

Do not millions of us individually fear lest —if we let thought and reason have its way with us—it will 'land' us where (we fancy) we would find it rather inconvenient personally to be? There must be large numbers living thus in what you can only call intellectual bad faith. They dare not look within. They spend life in habitually 'looking the other way.' Certain questions are instinctively avoided, not because they are not interesting and vital, but just because they *are* terribly interesting and vital, and because, if looked at steadily awhile would demand action and inconvenient personal *decision.*

How many discussions have I not heard in which, when the opponents begin to come to grips, a singular silence comes over things and the twain silently break away. It is getting too deep, too pointed, too near the need for a crucial *decision.* One of them calls it 'hair-splitting,'—forgetting that

> 'A hair, perhaps, divides the false from true.'

Too often, by the face-saving remark that 'life is bigger than logic,' we absolve ourselves from any formulated solution, from consistency, baulking the end half-won for an instant's dole of ease. If life *were* bigger than logic, that does not absolve us from pressing this search for

truth *as far as* it will go. It will shed light on that penumbra of life which it does not totally explain. Because reason and the use of our whole nature do not do *everything*, it is assumed that they will do little or nothing. Life is only ' bigger than logic ' in the sense that an express train is bigger than the rails : but what if the train leaves the rails ?

In matters of religion, millions have nothing more than an inwardly home-made ' religion of the heart,' the remaining ingredients being custom, habit, pragmatism, hearsay, eclectism, and the ambiguous supposition that if we do no harm to anybody, but rather a bit of good (good, meaning giving them a bit of pleasure mental or physical) it must surely be all right ? But nothing short of the best is all right. The idea of *fighting* with their *minds* for their faith is strange to most people, and even repugnant. They have not earned even the exiguous mental and emotional outfit they seem to have. It was ' in the air,' and it has somehow stuck loosely to them.

The wonder, beauty, and terror of the possible destiny of a self-conscious spirit do not call one man in five thousand aside for investigation, to find an answer which will satisfy his intellectual self-respect even if it does not yield all the affirmation he would wish.

You would reasonably suppose that half of a rational soul's leisure would be earmarked for reading, musing, or listening upon this and cognate topics; and you would suppose something wildly different from the facts.

Here again, *not to decide* is to commit oneself to a tremendous decision, and make the worst decision. An intellectual mistake is better in the sight of God and reason than inertia. Even *interest* in Thought would be something; but it is not inculcated. We shirk the temporary tension.

Millions are born and die without having once, in the dreary interval, made one deep decision of the mind, espoused one cause by reason, or produced one original personal thought. Instead, they hungrily—with a speed and eagerness that betray—snatch at some current tag which excuses them from personal will or mental action. And popular writers, courtier-like, excuse and praise this irresponsibility as part of our national 'genius.'

Take the current bromide phrase, for instance: 'One kind of religion, if sincere, is as good as another,'—I think I could get that naïve proposition passed by huge majorities in any chance crowd. But turn it to read, 'any course of action,' or 'any novel or drama,' or 'any theory,' if sincere, is as good as another; and

then, like the farmer's wife, see how it runs!

And there is the curious hint one hears that you can quietly jettison 80 miracles from the Gospel and 120 from the Acts of the Apostles without making any difference, without losing the whole point of Christianity (the Freedom and supremacy and redemptiveness of God in his own physical creation), and without exposing the writers of scripture as a set of incompetents. In that case, *why waste a minute over them* or accept from them the portrait of an historic Character? Trimmers and dreamers should face the steel, and not try to enjoy the stolen pleasures of belief without its intellectual obligations.

Or consider the enthusiasm which journalists, 'innovatory' young novelists and *literati*, students and others fall for the newest thing and the latest departure. Truth and sincerity, it appears, at last have dawned for the first time: down with the previous trophies of thought. 'A complete collection of these solemn pronouncements,' says Ernest Newman, referring to the Lollards of art, the modern-at-any-price people, 'ought to be made before it is too late, for the amusement of posterity. To the detached and philosophic observer, most contemporary writing (of the above-

mentioned sort) has a touch of the comic about it, coming from the fact that the people who are most eager to instruct the world as to its true inwardness are blissfully unconscious that all they are saying to-day has been said in the past—the names and the labels of tendencies alone being different—and that history, having turned most of the similar theorising of the past into merely a joke and a sore shame, is hardly likely to be much kinder to the theories of the present. When we read the atttacks of the bright young people on romanticism, for example, it seems unkind to remind them that they are some seventy years at least behind the times. The great men went on without the slightest suspicion of what dreadfully out-of-date fellows they already were ; and posterity seems to have justified them.' It is not they, but their fierce young modernistic critics who, he says, are now a historic joke. ' There may be a certain amount of sense in standing modestly aside, with a warning knowledge of the past in your mind, and watching the fun of the fair as provided by the theorists who seem to be completely unaware that this old earth has seen many generations of *their* like, and will see many generations more.'

Such is the entertainment afforded to the convinced and reasoning holder of the *complete*

Christian philosophy. He perceives that our eager-hearts never come to grips with it. They are charging windmills—or else local caricatures of the authentic thing. And he forgives a good deal of their hot air, knowing that after all it is only the *whole* Christianity is credible. We often hear the remark: 'Ah! now I understand: now you're giving the whole story.' It is the piecemeal that puzzles and antagonises.

Men of wide philosophical culture have increasingly rediscovered what the American modernist, J. H. Randall, calls 'the extraordinarily rich and complete intellectual life' of the historic Catholic philosophy. Impressive from such a source is his tribute this year: 'Compared with it all the successive philosophies that men have worked out since are mere ephemeral things of a day that have become for us objects of mere historical interest. It is far superior to the fragmentary, inconsistent, self-contradictory views of modern scientists and philosophers . . . with much less of the muddle and confusion, the failure to think things through, so characteristic of the thought dominated by natural science.' Until modern 'isms can offer adequate spiritual guidance, Randall adds, reflective men 'will find in traditional religion the wisdom they crave. Orthodoxy has an *intellectual* power that

liberalism has so far lacked. In face of the uncertainty and confusion, muddled thinking and contradictory ideas that abound in modernist circles, its tenets stand out with clarity and precision. Particularly is this true of the refined and elaborate thought of Catholic philosophy. It has always stood for reason.'

Such a rational vision of God and the world, of mankind and its destinies, many of us find is nothing less than *intellectual* redemption and liberation, a never-failing exercise for the active reason and the rest of our nature. One notices ironically that the advocates of the anti-reasonable life of 'parshion' and libertarianism have to make the shapeless life plausible by a sort of *reasoning!* There is no escape from intellect, even though it be not everything.

The modern impressionism and assertion of the flesh to the prejudice of the rights of divine philosophy will pass, as other rootless fashions of emotion have passed—of their own unsoundness. Truth prevails; but it does so in proportion as its defenders speak up for it.

The craze, too, for 'travelling light' in principles and beliefs will also be a transient one; to grow at all is to grow through it, and out of it. 'Sketchy' belief is costly. 'Easy' thinking means difficult living. We cannot

muddle through in the moral and mental life any more than in industry, government, domesticity, and war. Nobody can put biology, psychology, ethics, and metaphysics in a cheery formula on a post card: then why expect to do so with the knowledge of God? S. Paul once had to deal with people who cried for an infantile version of the superb symmetries of the Faith. It was unmanly, he told them, to prattle the rudiments: 'You are become weak again. Whereas you ought to be teachers, you need to be taught again the first elements. You need milk; but strong meat is for men. You are become like children, unskilful in the word. Go on to things more perfect.'

Suppose you are out in unlighted country on a treacherous night. You have a choice of two maps. One is delightfully 'simple,' with only two or three positions marked. The other is definite, full of 'dogmatic' detail. The simple one is easy enough to scan; but if you rely on it, probably the police will find it on you when they drag the pond. The genuine map (by a firm of topographers who have done every yard of the ground for centuries) does take an extra bit of consulting; only it avoids the mortuary! And it turns out 'simpler' in the end—far simpler than self-will, passion, or blindfold organic appetites.

The age, as Wells says, faces 'monstrous dangers.' In it only one philosophy claims to have sure guidance, a claim it keeps on making good by performance.

We come to that straight away.

## XX

### LOOKING FOR A CHURCH

GORKI, I read in his latest grim novel of Russian life, says this age is full of men who 'spend too much time in efforts to solve questions of a material character, completely ignoring the riddles of spiritual life. Politics is a province of self-assurance, which deadens the more profound emotions of men. A politician is a limited man; he considers the alarums of the spirit as something like a skin disease. All these empirics and Marxists are artisans; and life demands artists and creators. . . . But there have appeared people of a different structure of thought; they open up to us the mysterious illimitability of our inner life: they enrich the world of emotion and imagination.'

He—a child of revolution and denial—sees the need of religion and church. And we men of the twentieth century, too, want a religion—personal, certainly; communal if possible. We know a little of Comparative Religion. We

know, some more and some less, what a religion ought to do for mankind and the individual soul. In our search for a religion or a form of worship or fellowship, we shall look for one that has the primal and essential things first. We must use our judgement; not give way to nerves: and look at the roots, trunk, and sap of the tree, not at the colour of a leaf here or the bend of a twig there.

The fairest and best way to judge a Church, I submit, is to ask, Which brings home to me, year after year, the most vivid realisation of the presence of the Eternal and of Christ? You cannot go wrong if you patiently apply it in turn to each of the denominations that offer themselves to your notice. It is the best question because it defines after all *what* the organised body exists for: to show forth God and Christ, not bits or aspects, but the *whole* undisrupted Christ, Divinity, humanity, flesh and blood, soul and body, deeds, teaching—*all*.

All details sink into insignificance compared with this central test, of *conveying* to the believer (of any race, every century, in all climates, classes, and situations) the overwhelming sense of Christ's nearness, uniqueness, Godhead, grandeur, suffering, intimacy, and power. The Church which does *that* best, most reverently, richly, and impressively, will be pronounced

by the candid inquiring soul to be supremely *God's* Church; whatever other purpose Providence may have in reserve for the other organisations.

The human mind is a very delicate instrument, too easily disturbed, rather mercurial, often rather lazy, only too pleased to think that the bedroom into which we happened to be born contained at the same time the ultimate thing in the way of truth! Many people let temperament, habit or interest have the last word and sway them. So they live and die without ever having really *reviewed* their position, without once passing an original judgement on their ancestral bundle of prepossessions, and without having performed a genuine act of choice or free will between cradle and grave.

Ask yourself: 'Do I *know*, personally, from considerable actual experience and participation, the atmosphere, spirit, and practice of all the main bodies who profess and call themselves Christian? Because if I do not, I am foolish if I set up as critic and censor. I am committing the same absurdity and sin (but in a graver affair) as the jingo who, never having lived in or studied other lands, waves a flag and exalts his own land only because it is *his*. The fact that it is *his* does not make it *God's*, nor the best.

It is odd that men should be at the pains of writing or compiling books on fellow-Christians of whom they have only second or third-hand hearsay evidence. What a loss it is to their readers and to them that they cannot or will not subpœna some of those with *inside* experience of the subject so confidently criticised! If they were writing about China—or still more, about a country which is a political ally—they would take that ordinary precaution.

When some friend, or opponent, is disclosing some doctrine or thought to which we have hitherto been a stranger—we ought to say: 'Listen! What is that he is saying? This seems to be a valuable and interesting idea he is putting. Without shouting him down, or suspecting that it will undermine mine, I will take note of it, and consider it disinterestedly at leisure.' Fair-mindedness of that kind is surely a high form of prayer. The acoustics of such a mind are favourable to hearing truth.

I can claim to know a few men who have put these principles of search into action successfully. It is useful to know, from the very inside, as a participant, every main type of Christian body. I think I know, sympathetically from within the various communions, their sincerities and their strong points; an advantage which

their *non*-religious critics do not possess, and an advantage too which many of themselves do not possess individually.

Assuming, then, the above criterion of 'the best Church' (as the man in the street would put it)—what extant body comes nearest to this demand?

Such a body will not only take Christ and every one of his claims with uncompromising seriousness and unanimity, proclaiming them through thick and thin. It will not discuss nor critically comment on him so much as proclaim him and identify its activities with his. It will be '*the most religious of religions.*' You will expect the note of Transcendence in it to be very marked,—the note of other-worldliness will penetrate its other tones. It will be (like Christ) extraordinarily fascinating to great numbers of human beings and will be very 'human' in that sense; and yet (or is it therefore?) it will also be the subject of violent differences of human opinion; and it will be extraordinarily against trimming or concession for the sake of popular vogue or acceptance.

This was the essence of his character; as careful readers of their New Testament will at once recognise.

So far, we are *collecting traits and clues*—not as the trained theologian would, but as an

ordinary seeker from outside would. Let us find some more crucial birth-marks, before we look round and see whether they fit anything that exists anywhere in the world.

Assuming then that, up to now, I have the reader practically with me—or at any rate interested in this detective method, and willing to concede my good faith and lucidity so far—let us see whether there are not still several other pointers.

There are : several of them.

This body would have, as Jesus Christ had, a rigorously sensitive conscience as regards the immutability of theological truth, and the truth flowing from that ; an unyielding respect for the integrity and entirety of doctrine, and obligations ; but also—note the apparent contrast—an astonishingly indulgent way with the individual sinner, especially the one who falls through the frailty of the flesh ; so much so that self-righteous yet highly moral men visited God Incarnate with their displeasure on this very count ! He was terribly strict with sins of the mind, with false teaching, with double-mindedness, with self-esteem and ethical pride ; but he showed a daring indulgence toward human frailties and human follies. To this day, men can hardly understand his creatively sympathetic and helpful attitude toward moral

lapses ; especially when coupled with sternness about revealed truth or doctrinal wholeness.

Well, you must expect—if there exists a body incarnating the Christ-Life—to see this paradox vividly repeated in it. You would predict that it would show no cowardice about statement, no courtiership to crowd, throne or tribune, no tampering with the *corpus* of truth ; that it would get its worst knocks, as Our Lord got *his* worst knocks, for claims and statements which could have been modified in a moment if he had liked. He had only to waive some of the ' extremer ' claims ; and he might have been accepted as one of the succession of prophets, and all would have been comfortable and easy for the world and its spokesmen.

You can be absolutely assured also of this :

If Christ has upon earth a Church which is uniquely and utterly his (in a sense that nothing else is) it will repeat his other experiences and features remarkably—that is to say, it will be :

(1) Persecuted ; which *to-day* means that it will be labelled and libelled, misrepresented without the trouble of being understood or heard in its defence. In official and worldly circles, it will rarely or never be permitted a ' look-in ' when more complaisant prophets are available. Like him, it will be criticised for contradictory and mutually destructive reasons

—now as too unworldly, and now as 'kind to the publicans and sinners': now as too authoritative, and again as too concessive to 'the common people.' It will be like him, 'a sign that is spoken against'; it will be no more convenient, in a worldly way, to belong to it than to have been one of our Lord's first followers! Make no mistake about that. *Good men will be against it*—as virtuous and worthy men stood apart from Christ and criticised and deplored his activities!

Yet it will, just like Him:

(2) Have power over myriads of hearts and souls, will speak 'as one having authority,' not guessing or submitting, but speaking from the depths of a profound consciousness of its identity and divine mission and chosen status. It will be amazingly loved—also feared and hated, by different sets of people. It will always wonderfully know its own mind as Jesus always knew his.

(3) Independent; that is, free of political mundane obediences—speaking royally though with goodwill to this world, as our Lord did—not as one of them, but still as a King—a King *in* though not *of* this world.

(4) Another mark of genuineness and truth in a Church will certainly be its hold on *the poor*, and the liking of the poor for it. I mean

the obscure and the under-dogs,—the sort for whom Nietzsche had no use, the sort for whom Marcus Aurelius, and some respectable modern bodies, and class eugenists, and higher critics have no use. I mean servant-girls, garage-hands, chorus-girls, 'bus conductors, policemen, soldiers, mill-operatives, stokers, harvesters,—even the broken earthenware, the workless, the down-and-out, the beggars. If these the world's rank and filers are not numerous in it, that body has not the real, the special Christ-mark. It may be useful, well-meaning, respectable, worthy or good in its limited local or class manner—but the Christ-mark is not impressively on it. But the body which continues Christ himself to the ages must have, as an indispensable feature, this quality of the pell-mell and miscellaneous,—levelling before its holy of holies, Duke and dustman, actress side by side with artisan, crowds of journeymen with journalists and novelists, the poet with the potman and porter. *That* would resemble the following of Our Lord. *He* would recognise the sensation and atmosphere of this crowd with its nondescript universal quality, its rough diamonds, its rare souls, its inarticulate, its plain folk, its intelligentsia, and its saints.

(5) There will be in it no arbitrary human gulf of estrangement between the inward and

outward, between the spiritual and sacramental; it will be of course ethical and spiritual, but at the same time concrete and bodily (on the principle that 'the Lord preserve you, spirit, soul *and body*'). In this it will distinguish itself from the merely mental and semi-abstract religious schemes; seeing that Christianity *knows well what to do with God's creature, matter*, because it is the *incarnational* religion, the religion of a Body—a Body taken into himself by God the Son; a religion committed to a mystical Body; whose members participate of the sacramental Body; issuing in the present sanctification and future resurrection of a body. This will be one of the intense marks of its truth and its Divine origin. These are its *differentia* from human philosophies, its antithesis to dualism, manicheism, and gnosticism in all their subtle modern forms, religious and other. By this you can 'discern the spirits,' and tell very easily the real thing from its simulacra, the sometimes well-meant and always piecemeal efforts of human minds.

(6) One more mark: Disconcertingness. I mean its startling way of uniting opposites, of bringing together in one the sundered aspects which others seem to deal in separately. One body of believers may proclaim just the Blood of Christ: another concentrates on ethics: a

third is keen on faith, and another extols works; a fifth commends sacraments, or one or two of them; a sixth is dialectical or intellectualist, a seventh is decent and orderly. But this body we are in search of will show all the colours in the Christian spectrum.

This will make it hard to separate and isolate the factors of its appeal and genuineness. You will never know how finally to label it—whether evangelical, ethical, disciplinary, sacramental, austere or rich, stern or meltingly merciful, plain or ceremonious, familiar or august: and you will end by calling it all these together. It will have a way with it as various as the heart of man—appealing equally to *all that is in man*, religiously—to godly fear and sacred dread, to compassion, to senses and eyes, to imagination and the instinct for oblation and self-sacrifice, to the æsthetic and ascetic too, to the love of beauty and to the heroism that puts the world on one side; to the emotionally intense and to the coolly rationalist; to the sense of Mystery and awe, yet also to the liking for clarity and certainty; to the love of order and the love of adventure, to the desire for security and firm footing as to the demand for daring and enterprise.

It is likely that, while men's *hearts* and *sensations* will be amazingly interested by it and

warm to it, their conventions and prepossessions will not quite know how to focus and classify it : the smug and the snug would probably not quite understand where to place it, and the mediocre or conventional—those timid of self-committal, and the self-conscious or worldly wise—won't trust themselves too often near it, being apprehensive of its incalculable charm and nervous of its possible demands. They will also be struck, and possibly offended, by the matter-of-factness of its dealings with Heaven and the Company of Heaven.

(7) I take it I shall have most readers with me when I add that another note of genuineness will be tough lasting quality. After all, the best external proof of survival-value is—survival. Staying-power is therefore a *sine qua non*. In a quest of this kind, all manner of prejudices one has ' caught ' have to be quietly dismissed or ironically discounted : and the man in earnest will ask ' what the years say against the hours, and what the centuries say against the years.' In short, forms of religion that liquefy, change or disappear are not very *likely* to be the truth. A church should be ' built for ' a long voyage —one doesn't *begin* to be impressed till it has lasted a thousand years or so.

(8) It has got to be a *religion for Men*. I say nothing cheap and derogatory about women ;

they are immortal souls, and have a vital place in the spiritual world. But Churches where they hopelessly outnumber the men are, to put it gently, failures. The congregation should reflect the numerical proportions of the population—about 55 per cent women, 45 per cent men. When you see this happen, you see one more sure mark of 'the real thing.' When you see it for the first time, you will be startled and wonder how it is done. Possibly some one to whom the spectacle is not welcome will offer you a childish theory to 'explain' it. Smile at the theory, and go on scrutinising the fact. If you do, you will discover the possible reasons are not 'natural' at all, but what some people call 'supernatural'—having a close affinity (or an identity) with the reasons which attracted men to Christ Himself, at least as much as women and children were attracted.

(9) A certain sign that you are up against living and dynamic reality is that the adherent of such society will nearly always be uniquely sensitive and zealous about it. In a particular way, I mean: for most parties and denominations can be a bit 'touchy' on occasion. I allude rather to a certain missionary *zeal*, a *pluck* in owning up to a passionate loyalty for 'the beloved community' without false modesty or pretended detachment. Of course this

fidelity takes odd forms, human nature being what it is—I will admit, not always 'nice' forms: for instance, haste to resent imputations, a desire sometimes to bring it anyhow into conversation. It's a beautiful thing, this idealising of one's spiritual home; do not blame or underrate it. It is a very precious thing in the life of those who feel it; and anyhow, it won't bite you. Look on it as what it is, a plain mark of the vitality and attractive force of the community that can inspire such an emotion in this tepid mundane existence.

(10) This real thing will assuredly have a very distinctive flavour—'salt with a savour,' Christ foretold for it; a character that 'cannot be hidden.' That is, it will Talk Back! It will not complaisantly echo the notabilities of the hour, nor borrow from them, nor revise its creeds at their suggestion. It will be quite curt in these respects. This is one of the deep-seated mannerisms by which we shall know it. If it is the lineal vital descendant of the Church of the Acts of the Apostles (which see), it will 'tell the world.' It won't ask the world or its celebrities to tell *it*. This will vastly puzzle the pundits and scandalise the professors. But that will be its way! Being what it is, it can't help acting that way. The timorous will think it rather disrespectful to

the noted Mr. So-and-so, and culpably unconcerned about Dr. Someone-Else. Which is exactly what the local potentates used to think about the Church of 'the Acts' (which see again). Quite frankly and without apology, it will regard itself as an outpost here of a more Real World, and behave accordingly. The sense of its own identity will out; the life within must demonstrate in a certain instinctive way and no other. 'It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us,' said the Church in her infancy; and in her adulthood *she is not likely to have lost that confidence*. You must insist on this characteristic: demand the Salt.

(11) Even non-members will be impressed by a yet additional note about it. What is that? Well, not so much a note as a complex chord—analysable into greatness, security, and a deep peace within its own borders.

This is important. Let us be more precise. An outside observer this summer wrote: 'How can bodies which suffer from religious doubts, dissensions and other weaknesses bring a feeling of security and greatness into the people's life? They know that great empires have risen and fallen, that numerous cults have appeared and disappeared, that ideas have formed and decayed, yet this body has outlived all changes, and evokes a sense of the Eternal.' If the body which claims

to represent and embody Christ through time does not give this sense of *profound inner strength and peace*, it is nothing. If you see a Church which does, follow up the clue : you are on the track : let all other projects stand aside for that : you are on the eve of the discovery. For an indispensable note of truth and divine origination will infallibly be that you can say of it :

> ' Thou hast a rock-built Fortress strongly stood
> Above the blind and battling multitude.'

It has got to have in it something of the Divine Transcendence. Seen in the large air of history, it will be ' moulded in colossal calm.' Though your faith fluctuates or weakens, its will glow on—enabling you time after time to relight your taper, to shut the gusts of the world out, to attain sanctuary from the draughts and imbecilities of your world, its drabness and commonness.

We are asking rather a lot, aren't we ? But we are after all asking it of God. Surely there is nothing here that he could not do and has not done ? In any case, *take nothing less*. To fob yourself off with ' second bests ' is an unspoken reflection on him. Be exigent. Demand. Expect. God loves a tall order such as this : He is equal to it. And then look round for the Fact, the answer.

You can at once dismiss gently all aggregations of human beings who are still ' making up their minds,' all collections of units who are conducting doctrinal deals to find a ' basis ' for thinking, for

> ' When the heart is full of din,
> And doubt before the portal waits
> They can but listen at the gates
> And hear the household jar within.'

So go on stipulating for this profound note of a guarded *Pax Domini*, and refusing men's ' No ' or old wives' tales for an answer. Here is a Modern Adventure of far more permanent significance than blimping to Australia on a 'plane, or notching another record in a motor-boat.

(12) I don't wish a simple honest word to be twisted when I submit next that another indispensable proof of an authentic church must surely be, *Unity*. No : I did *not* say uniformity, ' rigid ' or otherwise. Nor does one mean ' agreement on some main points ' merely. (Sincere minds will not make verbal difficulties over this grand characteristic.) The unity here meant simply implies *coherence ;* agreement of each teacher and teaching with all the others ; consistency ; organic interrelation ; vital oneness ; and unanimity on matters of revelation,

morals, and discipleship. Outside that, never fear, there will be plenty of room for variation of taste, character, temperament, and expression. There will be liberty to state one thing in various ways—so long as it remains, at the end of the restatement, the same thing—recognisably and substantially the same, untampered with. But oneness of belief is an essential : ' of one mind and judgement in all things ' as the Apostles insisted to the very first Christians.

Without this, you may admittedly have pious associations, useful study circles, idealist leagues, admirable research societies—what you will. But what you have *not* got on those terms is a body that can call itself an extension of the Incarnation or the Body of Christ. It is very nice indeed and desirable to have wide latitude of thought, speech and action in all earthly, political, intellectual and artistic matters—most of us who speculate or agitate take this as a right ; and we are justified in doing so in empiric and experimental affairs, where the method that works is the method of hypothesis, trial and error. But an hour's glance through the New Testament will tell any man that the New People who received the news of the Incarnation, the death, resurrection and reign of the Divine Son, gave—and were morally obliged to give—full and comprehensive assent

to all the historic and spiritual statements, of fact and doctrine, involved.

Anyone is able to take this or that element from the complete deposit of the faith delivered to the early Church and build on it beliefs, views, and variations of his own. Only, *if he does*, all that one can say—and it is quite moderate and reasonable to say it—is that he has not embraced the original Thing, the authorised version. Such may well be men of good-will, and some good ideas, religiously, socially, and what not; only the least penetration and candour should be equal to realising that this is *not the same thing* at all as holding Peter's faith or Paul's, nor in the *way* they held it, nor for their *motives!* Whatever such groups have got (and it would be foolish and uncandid to depreciate it) they have not got *that*. And they have, for that reason perhaps, also not got unity.

For unity means more than intellectually coinciding as a result of arguments and evidence, and voting. It means acceptance, with those first men, the same set of data—from the same motives—and in the same way and spirit. You will see this is another *kind* of product, brought about by a different operation: in short, a spiritual phenomenon, a reaction of the human toward some Divine initiative, and a taking

something *as it is* just because it *is* from God. Of course unity follows from that, simply enough. It only looks ' mysterious ' from the empiric, human or worldly level—just as Life looks enigmatic viewed from the chemical or mechanical plane.

(13) Being a modern myself, I was almost overlooking still another vital feature of such a body. Though many modern nerves automatically detonate at the mere sound of the word, we shall have to muster our courage to utter it. It is : Obedience. It is almost comic to observe how the generality of civilised, political western men hate the idea of this virtue. They bristle with suspicion at the mere sound of it ! To what is it going to commit them ? How far is it likely to curb their ego, whims, or activities ? It is not necessarily the wise, the gifted or the strong who jib the most nervously at this ideal ; quite often it is the half-experienced, the partly taught, the sciolist, the wilful, or the self-centred.

Yes, though one spoke with the tongue of angels it would be hard to persuade some types that this was a grace—as genuinely as is chastity, or self-denial, or patience under suffering. Your true worldling shudders at the imminence of these things.

(14) The community you are looking for

will most probably—nay, unavoidably—have a worship corresponding in sublimity to the majesty of him who is praised. In other words, it won't be afraid of *grandeur*. It will convey the sense of the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* of transcendent Diety. That will be its public, obvious note,

> 'one loud lone sound no other sound can tame;'

as 'the angels praise thy majesty, the Dominions worship it and the Powers are in awe.' Anyone realising however little of the stupendous nature of the Eternal and highest, will expect such a church to convey 'the sense of glory,' the idea of the Holy, the almost physical sense of the *numinous*, that stirring of the nerve of reverence which apprises us that we are in the presence of reality, and 'a devotion rich, deep, awe-struck, and passionately humble.' There cannot be anywhere in its corporate length and breadth any room for the timid, the hesitant, the fumbling, the primly provincial, insular, or the half-and-half. The note of the absolute will be vibrant within it. Men will feel variously (some gladly, some uncomfortably) the 'powers of the world to come' in it.

(15) It will be above those little taboos and abstentions that are 'all-too-human.' But neither will it oblige the self-indulgent by

being *merely* anti-puritanic or the abettor of human desires! (How popular it would be if it were.) While viewing moderate creature-comforts with a large mind, it will ask occasional bracing exercises in 'doing without'—for a purpose. Martyrdom, if need be; but not niminy-piminy. It will value asceticism—and keep it in its place.

(16) It will show no respect of persons and no insular colour-bar. Much nonsense is talked of race superiority; a white face is not the inevitable accompaniment of fine brain or sweet character! So this community will not be 'nobbled' by any colour, class, or set. It will be a Whole vastly more influential than its parts; and super-national. Pell-mell variety will be its external note.

(17) Whether it has the chance to apply it or not, it must have a *social* faith and scheme. It should be able to undertake to organise an entire society on a religious basis—not a few 'friends' only, as private associations might. The machinery of ideal and structure should be in it now, a plan coherently worked out, part of its philosophy: masters and workers, home and state, rights and duties, wages and leisure, marriage and birth—all firmly delineated in the light of eternity.

(18) It will cherish individuality (for God

deals also with individuals), but discourage individual*ism* as it conflicts with the sense of mystical solidarity, communal conscience, and altruism. Against solitariness and introversion it will exalt ' membership one of another.' It must accordingly be church-conscious, social, a communion of saints.

(19) It cannot countenance bibliolatry, text-worship and literalness, which have made so many worthy folk vulnerable to scepticism and panic. The letter kills. The living voice and spirit are what guarantee and hold faith.

(20) It will obviously and necessarily be *organised* religion. Organisation is the inseparable mark of Life. Heterogeneity is a mark of death. So it will be organised and integrated, like your body and brain. And it will value its Form as it does its Spirit—aware that the Form is simply a manifestation and gift of the spirit inhabiting it.

(21) It ought to shine in crises—world, national or individual. It should show a singular power of recuperation. We must ask that it shall be at home in conjectures of pain and bereavement—and that it must not, incidentally, forget its dead, but pursue them with attention and benediction, claiming them as still belonging to it in some ways.

(22) It is vital that it should have a vigorous bureau or exchange for dealing with the myriad poisonous mental worries and burdens of men, women, and children: a clearing-house for maladies and 'things on the mind' which cause most of the tragedies and frustration of the world. Spiritual ventilation and disinfection ought, obviously, to be going on in it all the time. Such a church will make lonely secretiveness unnecessary. Better the open sore than the concealed imposthume. Better the clean breast and consolation than the slow hardening or auto-toxæmia that overtakes those who never have an inner spring-clean. It will not have the sacrilege of psycho-analysis without, there and then, applying the Divine balm and renewal: there it will differ from all earnest experimenters who have not its resources. You cannot seriously envisage a church without this function.

(23) In it there must be always the possibility of what is called the element of 'miracle.' A poor sort of representative of incarnate God that would be which is miracle-shy; which never experiences—and does not expect to experience—direct action from Above on body as well as soul. The timorous distinction (by which God is permitted to act on souls but not on bodies) is artificial. It is not even scientific

—as the newer coming scientific philosophy will prove.

(24) You would expect it to continue the Incarnation method, by which God deliberately *adds* something tangible to the former general sense of him as simply spirit. It is seen in ourselves: the human mind or spirit is (intrinsically) non-spatial and ranges in thought and influence through space and time; yet it is attached to a local brain without being *confined* therein. So, too, God is deliberately accommodated to our faculties and devotion—not only in a certain Form divided from us by 1900 years of history, but in a purposed sacramental mode in all generations. Yet this localisation does not limit or bound him; it just focusses love and worship; and, as his doing, is as spiritual and divine a work as any can be. This, then, is a note of the organism which perpetuates the Incarnation principle.

These notes, with one or two others which theologians indicate, would seem to compel men of good will, sensitiveness to the Spirit, and acute intelligence to enter their names in its roll.

And now—is there such a body?

There is.

I affirm that there does exist now, on the earth, a Community answering fully to

all these exigent demands. One, and only one.

It is a fact that a sacred Society, at every clock-tick of every night and day, as the years fall into eternity, mystically lives over again the life of Christ; that it intensely and intimately realises his acts, words, and pangs; that it actualises and manifests him, the Eternal Word, and its 'hands have handled the Word, the Life who was with the Father'; that this strange yet familiar, everywhere-present living creature has no empty churches, no divergences of belief or loyalty or statement; and that its prayers—in variety, range, and profundity—amaze and abash the few outsiders who have knowledge of them, so that the late H. W. Massingham wrote of his astonishment at their vivid reality, 'their devotional privacy, their intense consecration of the spiritual powers, and their rich variety of appeal' which others miss. And the name of it among men is the Holy Catholic and Roman Church.

Tens of thousands know the fact without joining her. Millions feel it in their bones without following it up by practical action: just as thousands have admired Christ without becoming Christians. It is one of the *overlaid instincts* of men that She is the Divine represen-

tative. Outside her, myriads have a subtle inescapable suspicion of the truth. They look, wonder, hesitate—and stand still.

As a layman who sees a lot of the world, I see many instances of this.

Her gravitational pull, however, is there. Some have got her on their nerves ; others on the brain ; others in their hearts.

If we can rid our minds of parochial politics and what Harnack called ' historic twaddle,' and judge her spiritually, ' comparing spiritual things with spiritual ' as S. Paul put it, we shall be touching realities. Human, local or temporal flaws will not blur our vision of the Divine in her. We shall give a very attentive look at her great characteristic liturgical actions, as at Easter, Pentecost, Corpus Christi, or Christmas, and perceive her genius for adoration through the Leader of all her worship by his Real Presence. We stand a chance then of seeing partly why, as a detached judge (Mr. T. N. Williams in the *Welsh Outlook*, 1930), observes : ' Like storm birds driven toward the sheltering rocks by a deep instinct, men go to the Roman Catholic Church. They realise that she survives all changes. It is a Church that evokes the sense of Greatness and of security : a sense of the Eternal. . . . It stands also on the main roads of our drab civilisation

as a representative of Sacred Beauty and succeeds where other churches fail.'

As well as being the Church of the poor, the crowd, the artistic, and the ascetic, it is increasingly the Church of the intellectuals who to-day hold on to the Incarnation, because, as a modern or liberal writer like Hardwick this year writes, she contains, owing to her width and antiquity, 'religious and cultural elements of every kind—pools where lambs may drink and depths where elephants may swim.' It is possible to glory in the divine origin and constitution of the Church and her beauty and yet to see that she has her human elements and that individuals or classes in her fail to appraise or reflect adequately the ideal she has for them. At any given moment, the children of any community represent different stages of development and levels of culture. We may judge a chain by its weakest link, but in the moral realm we shall be wise if we finally judge a Church, a nation, or an individual by its best, whether real or ideal. And with the Church there is this peculiarity (as my friend, Mr. S. B. James, put it), that it is Christ who is her severest critic and her effective Remedy, and 'the appeal against any evils which occur in the household of the Faith is always to that Faith itself.'

Years back, I was puzzled about the rights of a Church, and since then I have discovered some dozens of friends who thrashed it out, and answered it in much the same way. We went straight to the first records—the title deeds—the birth certificate, or whatever else you like to call the gospels and the acts of the apostles.

I got a shock. For here again was evidence of the *vitality* in Christianity.

It was not a bit like the hearsay versions that many historical theorists or some religious critics had conveyed to my mind and the popular mind. What did I see? Look at it for yourself: give it an hour sometime. I saw with amazement a distinct and visible community of believers, acting exactly as an autonomous government acts. It used very decisive powers indeed over its own members and its own affairs. It was very conscious of itself and the Master whose rising-again was its tremendous theme. It took into itself converts as members of Christ—not of God as invisible, mind you, but members of God *incarnate*. *Visibility* was the key-note of it all ('That which we have heard, have looked upon, and our hands have *handled*').

But what a surprise to discover how vigorously *authoritative* its ways were! Its chief at that

time, Peter, pronounced what was virtually sentence of death on a man and his wife who had deceived and withheld something from the Church ! It sent its messengers where it would —not where *they* specially wanted. It made its laws about the status of new adherents ; it changed the Sabbath ; it repealed old custom and law ; it lived for sixty years without scriptures, till its chiefs put the living memory down on to parchment for the Church's convenience.

A Kingdom it was, itself, inside the heathen Roman empire, a spiritual society dealing with its own crises, beliefs and people—mercifully no doubt, but independently and with finality. *Not* a chance collection of like-minded folk, getting together for convenience, and with an idea of uplift—not that, but more an organism with heads and grades of servants, a monarchy in little.

I confess I was astounded, on coming again fresh to this terrific adventure story (called ' The Acts of the Apostles '—though it might be called ' The Acts of the Holy Ghost '). It disposed of most of the current polite and faint notions about the functions the Christian organism has the right to. It was as visible and active as any non-spiritual corporation ; it legislated and drafted, it received or expelled

as it judged fit; it asked obedience—and got it, without physical force or menaces of course, but got it.

My 'democratic' mind saw at once that this amazingly living creation of Jesus Christ's was as brotherly and affectionate and co-operative as you like; but not what we call democratic, governed from below, or equalitarian. It was an order, with its principals and its general rank and file: it knew its own mind, and when it clashed with pagan governments later, it won and they lost. It won because it was organised, led, commanded, divinely built, and faithful. That is history.

In short, here was a new entity—a new Thing—come to birth in the world. And as such it went on acting for centuries; it was not a 'voice' without a mouth, a set of opinions without a Mind to direct them. It would have been eaten up very soon if it had been that.

If the idea was to give Christ's powers and his believers a Form of incorporation which would live independently alongside any earthly type of government—monarchist, republican, parliamentary, dictatorial, communist, oligarchic, anything—always keeping its rights, its identity, and unity, and its own one government, it was remarkably well endowed for the voyage through the centuries!

Notice also that living *membership* of it, *union* with it, was held to be as important as mental assent to the message. Breach of unity was regarded as gravely as meddling with the faith.

Now the man of the world who is fair as well as observant will see that a great spiritual body like that, with its own autonomous constitution, and its awful and responsible charge to keep the Faith committed to it, will as certainly have its strain-points with the world as the individual Christian has *his* difficulties with the same world. If it gave in every time its mission clashed with the *convenances*, it would be as worthless as the so-called Christian who did the same thing.

For Catholic vitality, in the Church as in the individual, though it is normally joyous, may occasionally clash with the will of mundane groups and individuals. It has peace within; it cannot always have uninterrupted peace without.

## XXI

### THE COMING BATTLE FRONT

WHEN you watch the break-up of a nation, it is very like seeing the decomposition of a body

' slowly quickening into lower forms.'

The nobler syntheses weaken; the less noble associations become prominent. In a debilitated society, men and women still meet, but it is for poorer motives and shorter ends. The vaster group-consciousness dwindles; a sensuous ' good time ' brings them together, instead of the former ardours and questions. You can get a set at tennis more easily than a quorum at a philanthropic committee or for a divine service.

That, in brief, is *decay* defined. The finest things of course are always first to suffer. Thus the Church instinct goes earliest; the nation's consciousness and the zest for causes next dim; then party sentiment (in the high sense of Burke) begins to weaken at the knees; ideals

cause an uneasy smile. Yet men must meet, so they meet on lower grounds, with a different ideology and vocabulary, which they call 'business' or 'fun.'

To some extent this is what is happening over wide areas under our eyes. I will not labour further the familiar point that, as Mr. Joad wrote in the *Spectator* (February 15, 1930), 'the life of western man, in spite of triumphs over nature, power of moving rapidly over the earth's surface, mechanical marvels, and jazz music, is not all he could wish; that it wears at times an air of aimlessness, even of futility, and that it tends to restlessness and discontent, except when there is some positive reason for contentment. He has won powers fit for the gods, and brings to their employment the mentality of a schoolboy. We are taught to fly in the air like birds, and to swim in the water like fishes, but how to live on earth we do not know. . . . The phenomena with which we are familiar are not peculiar to this country: they are not even peculiar to the Christian religion; they belong to our age rather than to a creed, and could be paralleled from a survey of Mohammedanism, Hinduism, or of any of the great religions of the world.

'It is not that people do not wish to believe. . . . In a world without purpose nothing seems

worth while, because a world without purpose is also a world without values. People, in fact, are suffering from an unsatisfied need to believe.

'Hence arises a host of religious substitutes, Pragmatism, Humanism, and the doctrines of Creative Evolution, which seek to appease the hunger of men's souls by assuring mankind of its fundamental importance in the universe. Whatever may be the truth of these beliefs taken as accounts of the universe, they cannot be said to afford an adequate substitute for the consolations of religion. To conceive of the human race as the centre of the cosmic process is to deprive that process of significance, while to those who do not find Man an adequate object of worship, *the conception of his ultimate perfectibility will seem trivial and petty, making Man himself smaller* by robbing the universe which he contemplates of all its splendour.'

Next, Mr. Wells in a dozen places admits that such experiences are best obtained and preserved by *association.* 'There is no such thing as a self-contained religion, a private religious solo. Certain forms of Protestantism and some mystical types come near to making religion a secluded duet between the individual and his divinity, but that may be regarded as a perversion of the religious impulse. Just as the normal sexual complex excites and stirs

the individual out of his egotism to serve the ends of the race, so the normal religious process takes the individual out of his egotism for the service of the community. It is not a bargain, a "social contract," between the individual and the community; it is a subordination of both the existing individual and the existing community in relation to something, a divinity, a divine order, a standard, a righteousness, more important than either.'

Exactly: a profound and vital instinct in the race clings to the concept of a Church, a Kingdom, a spiritual Home, a fortress of the soul, a camp and meeting ground where are possible sanctuary, refreshment, fraternity, interchange, prayer, instruction, and guidance.

That is why, for example, Dr. Inge's prejudice against the institutional is sub-normal, and falls short both of the human and divine intention. Belief or devotion strays or evaporates unless enshrined in a Polity. Criticism of the Church as a 'theocracy' or 'empire' could be used just as well on behalf of anarchy.

What the editor of *Everyman* says of Mr. Wells is certainly true of many others; that they are 'obsessed by the evils of the moral and religious traditions of the past. He proposes to throw tradition overboard with one vast effort of imagination. But he does not succeed.

Tradition will not be thrown overboard, because it is the sum of human experience.' And so Youth's best course is to enter and occupy the churches, to be a healthy ferment and sap in them, to drench them with youthfulness and modify their colour; instead of stopping outside on the pavement retailing *sansculotte* slogans. There is, after all, no substitute, even remotely likely, for the church. Not museums, not libraries, not sports fields, not rinks, nor cinemas, nor dance-halls, not motor-cars, nor petrol-spotted high roads.

I agree with the *Everyman* writer when he says: 'I can see no hope of a new religion. The religions that have arisen among us in the last few generations are not such as to deserve our allegiance, for they have greater shortcomings than the old. So the most that can be said for Mr. Wells's Open Conspiracy is that those who welcome it—and who amongst us does not?—should work towards the realisation of its ends in the religious spirit, keeping within our own churches (if we have any). For what hinders the realisation of our hopes is always our own moral weakness. Says Mr. Wells:

"Our antagonists are confusion of mind, want of courage, want of curiosity and want

of imagination, indolence, and spendthrift egotism."

The hampering effect of tradition and the old faiths is no more " a primary issue in human affairs " than " the antagonism between Capital and Labour." It is individual shortcomings, the fact that man cannot keep himself on the highest level of his ideals, that wrecks his good intentions. This personal individual character is the greatest problem of all, and the one with which religion primarily deals. Without religion and the means that it provides for " escape from the distressful pettiness and mortality of the individual life " there is no hope for man. Imperfect as they are, if we leave our religions we come into a moral wilderness.

You cannot " make " a religion, either, out of science or relativity, as J. W. N. Sullivan has said. In fact, the sciences only selected certain elements out of our total experience. But religion and philosophy cannot afford to do that. *Their* very purpose is to be comprehensive. ' A philosophy which attempts to base itself on the abstractions of science and, from that basis, to extend over the whole region of experience, is attempting the impossible. Scientific concepts are too thin, too inadequate, to support such a structure. It would be like trying to

base a sociology on the abstractions found sufficient by the life insurance actuary.'

Those who are teachable at all will note these conclusions of the clearer modern thinkers. 'There is no guarantee that the man in the street will, unassisted, arrive at truth in the sphere of religion any more than in the sphere of art or science,' says a facer of the facts, Hardwick, a tutor at Ripon Hall. 'And if I were asked what is the use of churches, I should reply that they keep religion from going bad; they are at the present the chief barrier against a revival of popular superstition, far more potent than popular education, in which, having seen a good deal of the results of it, I have no belief whatever. In nine cases out of ten, the man who gives up going to church merely falls a victim to the first form of superstition that comes along.' That superstition may take the form of his Sunday paper oracles, some 'broker' of science, a Utopiographer, a social theory that burkes the eternal issue, or a belief in omens, and so on. 'It is to be feared that it is very often ignorance nowadays which prompts an individual to try to live his religious life apart from all religious institutions: he does not know what he is sacrificing,' says Hardwick.

Any yet never were 'the churches' so ready

or able to help the average man and woman as they are at this moment. Against big odds of indifference, they are guarding a moral and social flame which even the selfish benefit by. Good work is done, and it would be better work if better supported by the citizens who at present are spiritually ciphers. Some of the criticisms discharged against these centres and their workers are true: others are ungenerous slanders which ignorance alone excuses. As a Catholic, I do not see anything on Sunday but full churches; there are special causes for that, such as the understood obligatoriness of Mass, the *habit* of going, the certainty of seeing a full attendance (these psychological factors do count), and, among the best, the real joy of a Sacramental faith. But I am objective and just enough to see that where other churches have been neglected, the guilt of the desertion falls mainly on the physical or mental laziness of people, *not* on pastor, sermon, service, or workers. The pulse of spirituality, love, and idealism beats low in the generality: that is the disagreeable fact which has to be faced. Even in the crowded Catholic churches, the zealous who carry their devotion well beyond the 'obligatory' duties (the neglect of which would mean sin) are the minor half. Human nature being what it is, it is an

enormous asset to a Church to have this law of obligation as a sanction behind the devotional pull. All the same, human nature is very human in that Communion as outside it.

* * *

At present perhaps *one in six* of the population trouble to attend church-worship at all regularly. Will England ever again be a church-going nation? Nay, shall we ever get *half* the population in their doors? (That would mean roughly three times the present number of worshippers.)

Possibly. It is hard to see what can bring it about, short of some immense change of mind, some prolonged national trial (which notoriously have had no such effect in the past), or some outpouring of moral and intellectual light.

We are told that the Christian spirit has percolated into laws and institutions. Perhaps. (So have other spirits.) But that is a side-issue. We are discussing a prior matter here—open, convinced, and corporate acknowledgement of God at agreed times and in the grand historic ways.

We are told also that ' numbers don't matter.' Apart from the fact that they matter a lot, alike to God and the Church, their absence

implies an eventual secularising and vulgarising of the nature of multitudes—a slow atrophy of the highest functions, a leakage of idealism and sublimity of interest for which no gadgets or amentites of invention or arts will compensate. That way lies the community-life of bees or beavers. Even rationalists of culture perceive that, and do not disguise their concern at the prospect. It may not disturb the thoughtless or the philistine; it may please the nihilist or the anti-God partisan. But it would be a world eviscerated of its Idea of the Holy, its noblest values, its mightiest vistas into the Unseen: except for a negligible remnant rather like the knots of early subterranean Christians. The race would be a race of polished and managed Robots, leanness in their souls.

Since by the law and make of his nature man is a deep-sea creature, a religious animal—and since, as Keats profoundly put it, the only meaning of the world is that it is ' a vale of soul-making '—thousands would rebel. Out of that revolt would come (along with movements toward the historic religion of the Incarnation) 'isms galore, of which we have not yet heard; we might look for a Walpurgis-night of transcendental theories, cults of the occult, a patchwork quilt of servile worldliness, rationalism,

magics, superstitions, bounderism—and the ancient belief.

People however who canvass the possible future disappearance of corporate worship of Christ are being rather temperamentally led. Such a situation is, in the full sense of the word, incredible. There will always be a discerning, solid-minded minority to whom the love of God in Christ is (to put it mildly) inexpressibly more intense and *interesting* than any possible shade of human love, because it is a relationship that contains every known emotional and moral satisfaction, including—peculiar to itself—a resonance that is infinite in kind and eternal in promise.

So much is this the case that everybody who has been awed and privileged by the experience feels, after it, a hope that really the alertest head which only knows it by hearsay should refrain from discussing the deep *differentiæ* of Christianity.

The one thing we *cannot* predict is the numerical strength of Christianity on the planet at any given future date. The one thing upon which we *can* wager our all is that Christ will be the heart's Life of some, and those the most spiritually clear-sighted, of the race. That hard, gem-like flame will always have the same lustre, steadiness and consistency—not of earth

or circumstance. It will always be strangely unlike anything else in experience, and always ineffably the best thing in experience. So long as consciousness, sense of values, search, and prayer function on the earth's surface, it will be true that 'Christ our life' will be the confession of those touched to finest issues. For the secret being out, can never perish again. It is the secure patrimony of the best souls of the race.

A word now on 're-union.'

The ideal of the ultimate practical unity of the bodies that own fealty to Jesus Christ is a self-evidently right and beautiful ideal. It is nearer realisation with every decade. All of us who have scanned events in the last thirty years can measure the pace of its approach. A single year or lustrum is too short to show the tide-marks; the point is that a light of this kind (once kindled), is guaranteed *not to go out*. It is lighted—and who dare quench it? There *is*, after all, despite his littleness and blunders, a divinity—a conscience—in man that will not tolerate his deliberately 'going back' upon a prospect which his moral sense has registered as good *per se*. People may get up and point out 'difficulties'; others may desperately suggest the 'compensating features' of division and disunity; others, less adventurous, may just sit still, and shake their heads wistfully

with the remark that 'it is very fine and desirable, but for the life of me I don't see how it's to come about.'

All in vain. *Events march.* The most unlikely types of event conspire toward it: a persecution here, common action there, an amalgamation of forces somewhere else, a war, a treaty, a new 'confession' drafted, mutual exchange of views, a missionary enterprise far away, even political and economic shiftings of gravity. God moves in a mysterious way; all the big things happen *circularly.* When they have happened, it is repeatedly seen that the busy-ness of individuals and the recommendations of committees have had a very minor share in the consummation. Vaster forces and imponderable influences have done it; though the co-operation of man has not been useless.

God's purposes travel silently in light-years.

* * *

Definite Christianity in the immediate future looks like having to face first, secularist defiance of Christian ethics and all super-human sanctions; and secondly, those who want an intellectually vacant and mainly emotional religion. They are of several sorts. One school merely invites it to throw over historic facts

(which is what differentiates Christianity from the unprogressive religions of Asia, with their static, ingrowing character and their lassitude).

Another wants to do away with the idea of personality, continuance or identity (human or divine). A third asks for feeling without statements, and of course without Revelation. None of them could ask this, if he had known the 'genius' of Christianity from the inside. Why is a vague belief preferable to a clear? Is a nebular mist higher in type than an evolved planet? Truth-seekers want *truth*, and don't give way to the weak bias for the *easy*.

Is not the crave for the 'simple,' at all costs, intellectually suspect? The simple is not necessarily the true. To demand that articulated Christianity should revert to one or two doctrines or precepts—this is like preferring acorns to oaks, protoplasm to flesh. What would any other science or philosophy retort to those who demanded that their step-by-step logical development should be thrown over, so that popular vogue would be easier? Surely that the suggestion was anti-evolutionary, anti-cultural.

We hear that the essence of Christianity, what matters, is the sermon on the mount. It is not. It is not this sermon any more than it is the parable of the sower. That

is only a part of Christ's social ethics—and the whole ethics is but a small part of him and his workings. Mere moral dogma could not have put Christianity on its feet for a month. It took a Man: a divine power, a death and rising, a creative founder. The Kingdom he fashioned did not talk his ethic simply—it proclaims, with a thrill unique, unlike any other thrill: 'He is risen.' Not to see that is to miss seeing the Atlantic for the ocean. The whole point of Christianity, its romance and motive power (on heart, head and imagination), is this: the Life that was with the Father manifested himself, was made flesh and dwells among us, rising again over death.

That is what Christianity, as a historic fact, is all *about*. It is not a beautiful formula heard on a hill, nor any other side issue, wayside parable or saying. Surely we ought to take the witnesses' own accounts as they stand—or reject them as delusion, rather than pick an odd half-chapter here and a saying there? Surely also we ought to let those who have lived longest and deepest in Christ have a say?

Christianity is still in its youth. Quite possibly triumphs await it among Eastern races, who will profit by our infidelities to it and our machine-worship; races whose thoughtful-

ness may give it a chance to produce its full effects.

Meanwhile what has the West to look forward to in the next ten or twenty years? A striking levelling-up educationally is going on. The widening margin of schooling over and above what office or works require may mean more floating discontent and emotional firedamp if it is not canalised on to interests worthy or engrossing enough. *Can* politics as we know it take youth's energy, idealism, and brains? Can the daily routine, sports, motoring, novels, etc? Only a minority of our educators know what they are producing for the future. Everywhere we are increasing individuality, sensitiveness, self-esteem, emotional demands (all good in their way)—but nothing emerges high and absorbing enough to meet all this awakened faculty! Hedonism and human passional 'love' do not fill the bill. Without some great emotional and intellectual synthesis—backed by super-human eternal sanctions—the next generations will run to waste or explode. Already, in proportion to their intelligence, people are getting blasé about speed records, non-stop stunts, radio this or tele-the-other, and the upholsteries and truffles of life. In fact modern Western man—it is a serious matter, and may be a tragic one—has come

practically to the end of his mundane sense-appeals and topics. The boomed 'triumphs' of to-morrow can only repeat to-day's and yesterday's; and these, if gains, have not exactly been spiritual gains. Not for us the simple joy with which philistines once hailed every new material gadget as a key of paradise. I find now in Mr. Wells and other futurist-minded people a pessimism about the limited value of our invention and a hankering after the secret of that magic door which will 'let you out.' (See *The Autocracy of Mr. Parham;* the words recall *The Tempest*, where Shakespeare, also at the height of his life, longed for the spirit that will 'make gape the pine to let thee out.')

Escape: that is what most people are attempting. And they fail on terrestrial lines; for it is possible only as a by-result along one road—of spiritual fulfilment in a richer order of things. Art, science, games, and fancy all fall short here. You have only to mix much with our intelligentsia to see they are, in the words of a *Times* critic, 'oppressed with the predominance of bodily desire in life, and have the melancholy of men and women locked in the flesh.'

The signs point one way. We shall have to give up the attempt to live in half an environ-

ment. ' In man's self arise august anticipations : men begin to *pass their nature's bounds* and find new hopes and cares.' Here we have a creature who outgrows the trite prose of his material environment and deliberately projects himself in a new Environment. Great worship, as on the peaks of the Mass, breathes and renovates him. This thrust toward an ampler world and unseen order is the condition of efficiency : it is not rebellion against law but co-operation with an eternal power that has caught them in a deeper current. Viewed simply as a denizen of earth, man has become, done, and seen his best : generally speaking, there are no surprises left on that plane. If, for example, Mr. Shaw could elongate life in the body to Methuselah's span, hatch us out from eggs or make us all brain ; if Mr. Wells got us all awhile into his temporal Utopia ; if Mr. Russell made rationalist rebels of us all ; if Mr. Galsworthy rendered us all sensitive barometers of human need, or Mr. Aldous Huxley made us into despisers of each other's weaknesses and into omnivorous ' life ' seekers,—it is only the old, old material *da capo !* ' Been tried, gentlemen, been tried all before,' the old civilisations murmur. And the ancient Church knows it. She says that what man needs is an infusion of the generically New. His blood by itself is poor. He needs cross-

fertilisation. He is an incomplete nature and implies (as Bacon said) 'God, his Melior Natura' (his better Nature).

At his best man is a seeker: here he has no continuing city and he looks for another. He is 'something to be surpassed.' Life is a thoroughfare, worship is a bridge, a nexus with a beyond; and man's hungers save him. Advanced, sophisticated minds come soonest to a dead end, having tasted whatever this scene offers; they look over the edge into the void and need this new start. This transcending of arbitrary limitations is only the struggle for existence, lifted to a higher level. It is the homing instinct at work, an orientation to new pastures to find what will sustain the distinctively *human*—the finer affections, conscience, reason, and the demand at the heart of every man for the abiding and reliable. A thousand reasons (clever or dull) abound in current talk and literature for burking the search; but the instinct is too profound. Man, by his genesis and structure, is forever religious, and set for the eternal. In great worship alone does he find harmony and happiness and his real basis.

The question of the externals and duration of life is comparatively unimportant; it waits on the prior question of the quality of life,

and its supreme destination. And we have it here : one theme there is that is inexhaustible—the development of a soul. This is a work of creation that can go on for ever, and for ever absorb our interest.

# ENVOI

IF this picture of our time clears any reader's mind, my object has been gained. It has been spade-work on the outworks; and the central mysteries have barely been touched. But what has been attempted is, I believe, what the men and women of the time want, amid a blizzard of rather bold and impudent anti-Christian talk and amid a steep post-War break in psychology and morality away from ethics based on any idea of responsibility to a more than human tribunal.

Human nature has been passing votes of confidence in itself, in Press, talk, and action. 'Humanism' is militant; the community idea is taking in many minds the place of God; and what is convenient for the Pack is declared the only morality. The only judge recognised by some is the State—including the expert, the doctor, the inspector. The theorist is loose, and disposes of others' liberties and rights very brusquely. It is the coming Prussianism; yet it is old as Sparta, as Frederick the Great, as Paine, Shelley, and Godwin. Militant *tem-*

*poralism* is the note of it all, and it may be the rage until, in a few years, it wilts of its own philosophic unsoundness, or the spirit of man sloughs that servile state. Faith in human nature, by all means: but not a blind faith. The fashionable anthropo*centrism* is a good deal sillier and more baneful than the old anthropomorphism. These arbitrarily foreshortened views that cut out the stars and the distances, and decide that man is his very own—autonomous, self-sufficing—will come an unholy cropper like all previous titanisms. Half-way houses will not do; not merely because they are draughty and leaky and unsafe, but because the intelligence discovers they *are* only half-way houses; and then their time is up. In the long run, only the Whole and the Best is good enough for awakened man.

Human nature cannot be believed in till it believes in something greater and holier than itself. Short of that, it is full of 'perilous stuff.' By this time it should be an axiom of experience for historian and psychologist that there is One that made us for himself and our hearts are restless till we rest in him.

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